ANUARY 10 — 16, 1981

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eve's weekly

SOME DRUGS ARE DANGEROUS IF YOU'RE PREGNANT

12 Painkillers, hormones, barbiturates, antibiotics. . . all part of the regular 'diet' of a typical middle-class urban woman. But they can harm the foetus irreparably.

DIARY OF A REBELLIOUS MOTHER-TO-BE

40 Does every pregnant woman have to spend hundreds of rupees on vitamins, calcium and iron to ensure the birth of a healthy baby?

SCHOOLING FOR PREGNANCY

16 Pregnancy and childbirth are associated with nausea and pain. But if you prepare yourself, it needn't be so.

THOSE OLD WIVES' TALES

44 Have you been told how to prevent the evil eye from affecting you, or how to get a male child? The over-protective mother-to-be takes no chances. With a broad sweep of regional rituals.

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TAKE YOUR PICK

1st PRIZE

With the advent of science, man is trying to gain mastery over all aspects of nature, including the determination of the sex of the offspring.

Various theories have been put forward about the ways in which one can have a male or female child at will. One theory is that the sex of the child can be determined by timing the intercourse. If one wants a son, one has to observe abstinence upto the ovulation period and have intercourse on the date of ovulation; for a girl, intercourse should be timed 2-3 days prior to that period. Likewise, an alkaline douche with soda bicarb in warm water is recommended for a boy and an acid douche, with vinegar, for a girl. The latest theory is that the child's sex can be determined by what the mother eats prior to and upto the time of fertilisation.

A diet rich in dairy products containing calcium and magnesium and poor in salts, predisposes to a girl while a diet rich in salts containing sodium and potassium and lacking in dairy products increases the chances of having a boy.

I was once discussing these theories with a gynaecologist and suggested to her that the surest way to have a boy or a girl would be to separate X-sperms and Y-sperms of the husband by differential centrifugation, (if only it were possible), examine them for appearance and motility to ensure that there is no abnormality, and then artificially inseminate the sperm according to whether the couple wishes for a girl or a boy. She told me that such a breakthrough in research would be most undesirable as it would create a dangerous imbalance in the proportion of the sexes, especially in this country where people are crazy after boys. I differed with her saying that it might have a beneficial effect to the contrary, in making people realise the importance of girls, sooner or later, so that evil customs like the dowry system, female infanticide etc., will be curbed.

DR. USHA V. PADIYAR, Baroda

Power is a super thing to possess. And knowing that you can have a male or a female child to order is another manifestation of power. There seems little doubt that science — not superstition — will unfold these genetic mysteries and we do not believe, in the long run, people will insist only on male children. What other repercussions these futurological forays will have upon society it is difficult to tell. . .

THE GIRL AND THE GUN

2nd PRIZE

Recently I saw "Insaaf Ka Tarazu", a heavily publicised film, in which two powerful Rape scenes are shown. The movie also has a very bold ending. Zeenat, the heroine playing the Beauty Queen and model murders the rapist, shooting him with a pistol.

But what about us, the ordinary girls? What should we do? We don't keep pistols with us, you know. The film doesn't show us how to take proper action in self defence. Our Mathuras and Maya Tyagis were raped openly, in the midst of people, by responsible Government servants. What happened in their case? They did not shoot their rapists nor did those judges resign as shown in the film.

Of course, there are plenty of things to learn from the movie, for our Indian males — the different and stylish ways of raping a woman. They will now start practising these stylish lessons. Since cinema has a strong impact on our public, such films should not be given too much publicity.

Once a woman is raped, she loses everything and, moreover, our Society ill-treats her, castigating her as characterless or impure. In any case we, women, are the only sufferers until we take action a la Zeenat shooting Raj Babbar. But then, what will the Government have to say?

MISS S.R. MULCHANDANI, Bombay.

No, we can't all carry guns and go around taking pot shots at the offending males. But, films like "Insaaf. . .", with all their drawbacks and lack of solutions, must be seen by as many people as possible, particularly the men. Let them be jolted, let them realise what they are doing, not just to the bodies but to the self-respect and dignity, of women. But, unlike the film's dialogue writer, we disagree that a woman should feel defiled or suicidal because she has been raped by a (human) beast.

MOSQUITOES PREFERRED?

One of my friends boasted the other day that, in her house, she lights a Mosquito Coil right from 5.30 p.m. and yet the mosquitoes manage to bite the children. What was surprising was that she is a doctor-housewife. I feel that it's time the housewives understand that the smoke from the mosquito coil is harmful to health, especially for children. The coils are made from what is called congress grass and the smoke, much more injurious than the smoke from cigarettes. These coils are not to be used near patients with breathing trouble.

While the Government has instructed cigarette manufacturers to print a statutory warning on their packs, I feel the law should be extended to cover anything which brings out smoke and which may be injurious to health.

I wonder how even some magazines which do not entertain cigarette ads, accept advertisements of certain brands of mosquito coil!

MINA CHANDRASEKHARAN, Bangalore.

We must confess we hadn't quite thought of it, this way! Perhaps there is something in what you say. Will all those concerned, take notice?

WOMEN'S (NON) PROGRESS

3rd PRIZE

Sometimes I do feel that our women must rise in revolt against what is happening all around in our country. Certainly, with all the cultural and educational, scientific and modern growth, our women are still where they were many years back. I do not think that our women can be deemed to have progressed simply because they are taking more and more part in day to day affairs in almost all fields. My conviction stems from the fact that our women's honour is still at stake, just as it was many years back. Our women are still exposed to danger, becoming victims of rape, kidnapping, exploitation, as it was in the past. There may be some slight improvement in their status but more or less, they are still liable to such dangers all the while. Why there has been no remarkable change in this particular aspect, is a matter worthy of discussion by the Women's Organisations of our country. Real freedom for the woman means she must be free to pursue her job, her hobbies, her own wish in whatever way she deems fit, without the slightest danger to her person. In following her own philosophy of life she must be free from all the hazards that are peculiar to her sex. When a woman moves with suspicion, or fear in society, I do not think she has the freedom she wants to enjoy. I wonder whether such complete freedom will ever dawn in the Indian woman's life, but to some extent this can be achieved if our Women's Organisations revolt to assert their rights.

MRS. PRATIBHA HARSOLE, Indore.

Complete freedom is not even "gifted" to the women in Western countries, leave alone the Indian woman. No matter how much a woman educates herself, or how much she progresses in her career, fear to her person will always live with her — until and unless all of us. . .women's organisations, the Government, the Law and Society, as a whole, make the effort to mend the evil.

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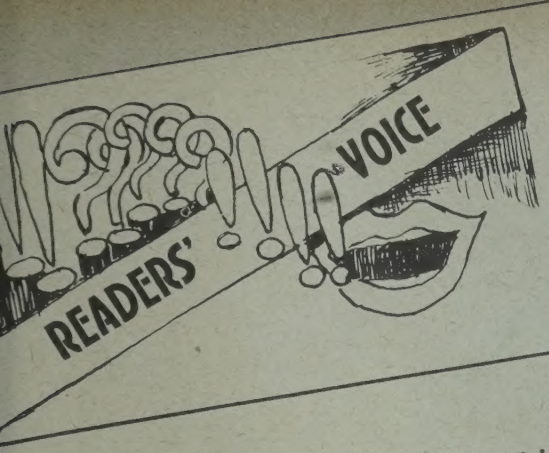

Most articles raise a question, a comment or at least a criticism. Write them down and mail them to us!

OOD WIVES

The article by Jyoti Jafa, "Just Friends" (November 8) was very nteresting. It portrayed clearly that married women do not form friendships with males because of what society will say. So, in order to be a "good wife" and a "good mother" she is forced to keep away from other men.

K. S. LAKSHMI, New Delhi.

A REAL ARTISTE

As a Hyderabadi, I was interested to read the interview with film star Madhavi by Jyothi Venkatesh (November 15). Having seen her frequently in Telugu films, I knew from the start that she was going to go places, so I was not surprised to read that she has joined other South Indian stars like Hema Malini and Rekha in the world of Hindi cinema. I had seen her in "Maro Charitra", the Telugu film in which she had a leading role, so it is fitting that she should also be in the Hindi version, "Ek Duuje Ke Liye".

RAJALAKSHMI B. KARAN, Hyderabad.

EXERCISING WOMAN POWER

Rehana Ghadially, in her article, "The Power Games People Play", (November 15) raises some interesting questions about the different ways that men and women exercise power. As a veteran of the women's liberation "wars" in the West, I would like to second Jean Baker Miller's opinion that power as typically exercised by men is destructive, and ought not to be imitated by women in their search for freedom and expression. To quote Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, "The woman has to be herself. And not only that, she has to help man become a little more feminine. There is a great need for a men's liberation movement — not liberation from women, but from all the nonsense that has been taught to them down the ages. . . Man has been taught to be hard, like a rock — man has missed much." Perhaps if we keep these words in mind as we search for more direct ways to get what we need, we can avoid the more "agressive and bitchy" aspects of the struggle for equality and freedom.

MA DEVA SARITO, Pune

EXPERIENCE vs. QUALIFICATIONS

In the introduction to the article "Multistorey Nonsense" (November 15) you have mentioned that the author J. B. D'Souza is a "well-known town planner". I wonder whether this was done after verifying the factual position. As far as I am aware, Mr. D'Souza who is a retired IAS officer has no academic qualifications, practical training or professional experience of the science of town planning. Of course as an IAS officer who has held many posts he must have dealt with files about problems of urban development and housing. But I doubt whether that is enough to make anyone a "well-known town planner".

S. S. KAIMAL, New Delhi

A GOOD STORY

The short story, "The Blinkers Of Love" by Sarojini Srinivasan (November 22) was interesting and educative. As the story beautifully depicts what is actually happening in our modern society, it deserves to be read by every young man who desires to marry a career girl so as to make his life after marriage a smooth one.

L. V. RAO, Shirali

ISSUE OF JAN. 17, 1981

THE HANDICAPPED ARE ALSO HUMAN

This year has been declared as International Year of Disabled Persons. But in a country where even normally healthy people don't get their due, what chance does a handicapped child have? Interviews with eminent personalities who have worked in this field. What does a blind or disabled child feel like to be singled out from his friends as "different"? First person accounts in the children's own words.

WHO WINS IN A CUSTODY BATTLE?

At one time the custody went to the mother, as it was felt that she was the right choice of Nature to bring up a child. It is no longer so in a fast changing world. A look at the laws that govern custody of a child after the divorce or separation of the parents.

WOMEN AND HEALTH

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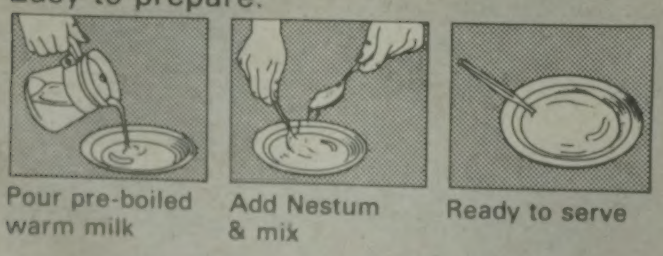

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NESTLE.

APARNA SEN

TO DIRECT A FILM

Monojit Lahiri

"REACHING A MOMENT OF TRUTH IN ACTING IS LIKE A SUDDEN SKYWARD SURGE. IT MAKES ALL THE TEDIUM WORTHWHILE"

Remember Aparna Sen?

The impish, tomboyish, child-bride of "Sampati" in the three-in-one Ray classic "Teen Kanya"?

The heroine of hordes of Bengali films, some good, most awful, of the last decade?

The scintillating exotic beauty of Ivory-Merchant's "Guru", "Bombay Talkies" and the recent "Hulabaloo"...? The star-crossed leading lady of such glittering flops as "Vishwas", "Sagina", "Kotwaal Saab" and "Imaan Dharam"?

After a brief voluntary self-exile, Aparna is back and signalled her comeback with a flourish! Her vehicle, "Nouko Doobi", directed by Ajay Kar and adapted from the Tagore classic, not only made huge waves at the box-office, but provoked, disturbed, dumbfounded and enthralled moviegoers in Bengal, where the devastating heroine-famine today, makes "Ashani Sanket" appear like a Jerry Lewis reject! With "Nouko" Aparna is back where she belongs — the top. And for excellent reasons. Beautiful and talented, Aparna is perhaps the only actress in Bengal who is articulate, witty, interesting with a personality and mind of her own. And yet, funnily, she is perhaps the only actress who just couldn't make it in the Bombay scene.

What went wrong with her Bombay connection? Wrong directors, stars, banners? Discomfort with an alien language? Insecurity? Non-involvement? For the first time Aparna comes out in the open and tells all about her Bombay bombs — among other things.

Q. You have been in films now over a decade and a half. Is there any change that you find in your basic attitude towards your profession/assignments vis-a-vis your earlier days?

A. Certainly! A very naive, idealism has given way to a more realistic, more professional attitude. I am now able to sort out with much more cool which films I want to take on for money and which for pleasure.

Q. Early in your career you went out to Bombay and made a lot of flops! What do you think really went wrong? With whom? And why?

A. I don't really know what went wrong. I suppose I am really to blame in that I never took the idea of a career in Bombay very seriously. My home and family were in Calcutta and I hated being away from them for long stretches of time.

Another reason for things going wrong could be that I never really took on a single film in Bombay purely for the pleasure of it. So there was perhaps a lack of necessary involvement and enthusiasm on my part. I made "Vishwas" because at that time I was getting nowhere in Bengal and I hoped that a Bombay film would lend me enough glitter for producers in Bengal to start wanting me again. I got a lot of offers from Bombay while I was working in "Vishwas" but I turned them all down because at that stage I really didn't have any plans for a Bombay film career.

I have never been able to work up a sense of involvement with the commercial film scene in Bombay. If I do work there at all, it will probably be with good directors making art films — unless of course it's a Bengali-Hindi double version.

Q. What are your recollections of your Merchant-Ivory films — the last of which ("Hulabaloo") you completed two years ago on location in Rajasthan?

Continued on page 51

Photograph : Talyeb Badsheh

DRUGS CAN BE DANGEROUS TO THE PREGNANT WOMAN, BUT OFTEN EVEN MORE DANGEROUS TO THE UNBORN CHILD. EVEN COMMON DRUGS NORMALLY CONSUMED WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT, LIKE ASPIRIN OR SLEEPING PILLS CAN DAMAGE THE FOETUS

WARNING: some drugs are dangerous if you're pregnant

Manohar S. Kamath

The easy availability of some specific drugs has lead to a gradual belief that drugs can cure almost every ailment. But now their harmful effects have also come to the fore and pharmacologists have started concentrating on the side-effects of drug intake. Of particular importance in this study is their effect on the pregnant woman, since she carries in her womb another human being who could be adversely affected by haphazard intake of drugs.

While our grandmothers believed in many quaint rules governing pregnancy and to most it was a life and death event, thanks to the spread of education and advance made by medical science, pregnancy has lost much of its terror and the pregnant woman today believes that the vast array of medicines available is a guarantee of a safe and normal delivery. But then are we substituting one set of superstitions with another? Are all drugs and medicines safe to the mother and the unborn child? This question has come into sharp focus in recent years following certain hair-raising discoveries of the effects of drugs on the unborn child.

One of the earlier beliefs about the care of mother and foetus was that if you took care of the mother, nature would do the rest and take care of the foetus. This was the basis of several traditions like over-feeding a pregnant woman and giving her the "best" nutrition. The first inkling that this axiom was not necessarily true came when a British scientist, N. Gregg, reported that the occurence of German measles in a pregnant woman leads to severe deformities in several organs of the unborn child. Then came the report from Dr. Stewart, U.S.A., that X-rays could damage the delicate tissues of the foetus and lead to gross congential defects.

Then came the great Thalidomide tragedy in 1961. This was a drug manufactured and marketed by a German firm as an antidote for morning sickness. It found acceptance on a large scale among pregnant women on the Continent, but when delivery took place it proved a nightmare. The babies were born with normal bodies, but their arms and legs were tiny flippers. This was proved later to have been caused by the intake of Thalidomide.

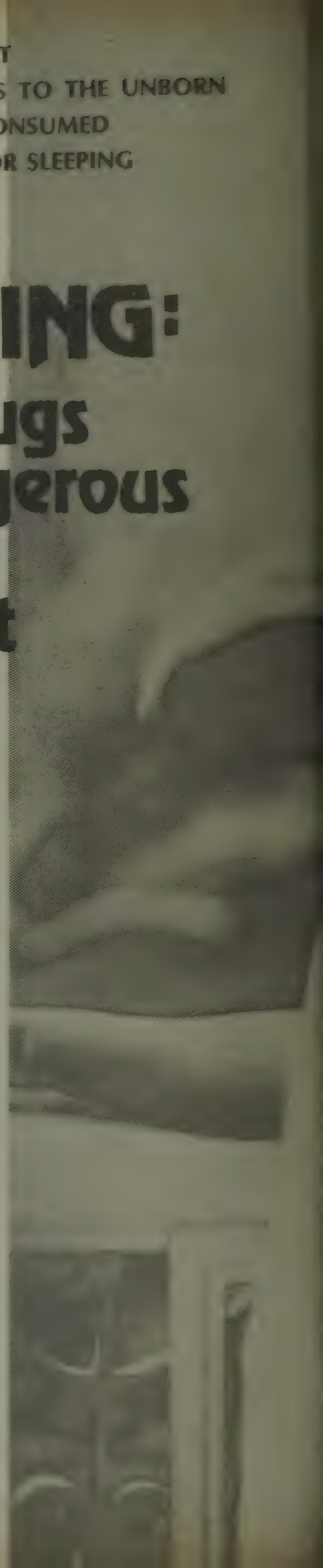
Events that followed proved to be a watershed in the history of medicine. The outraged women sued the company for selling an untried drug on innocent people and the company had to go into liquidation. The babies with the flipper-like limbs but sound mental development had to be offered governmental aid to pacify the furious public. Men and women all over the world realised their right vis-a-vis medical treatment and the responsibilities of drug companies. Doctors and drug companies were forced to think twice before they prescribed or manufactured a drug for fear of legal complications. Governments and drug administrators were forced to enact stringent laws to test drugs thoroughly before they were marketed. And last, but not the least, the importance of providing separate care for the foetus was realised, shattering the old myths that stressed on care of maternal health alone.

How does the drug or any other substance affect the developing human embryo? To understand this, we must go to the fundamentals of foetal development in the womb. Conception occurs at the moment of fertilization when the sperm fuses with the ovum or egg and results in a single cell. As the days go by, this single cell multiplies into two repeatedly so that a cluster of cells is formed. As the days roll into weeks, each cell or group of cells develops specialised functions and is assigned certain anatomical parts for development. If in these first few crucial weeks, any drug or substance which alters cell function were to affect any of these "specialized" cells, the result would be that the end-organ the cell would have formed, like a limb or an eye for example, may be affected.

Drugs and X-rays act on the human body by their capacity to alter cell function. X-rays penetrate the cells and pass through but not before causing minute alterations in cell nuclei and enzymes. As the cell represents an entire organ in the human embryo in the early days, this alteration of function means disaster. It has now been proved that allocation of cellular functions and susceptibility to external agents is maximum in the first three months in the womb, by which time most of the organs are well-formed. This does not mean that the dangers of congenital defects vanish after three months, but the chances of occurrence of gross defects affecting whole systems is rarer after this period.

A large number of women take drugs during their pregnancy either for pre-existing or sudden illness. Family physicians continue to prescribe drugs off the cuff to women without inquiring into their menstrual history and may be responsible for malformation without malafide intentions. A recent study in the United States revealed that pregnant women on an average took four different drugs during their pregnancy, excluding those meant as nutritional supplements. Their Indian counterparts may not be so much dependant on drugs for relief of minor problems, but a slack drug administration and poorly informed doctors may mean that many women may be taking potentially hazardous drugs without knowing what lies in store for their babies.

Among the many commonly consumed antibiotics are the tetracyclines (commonly sold under the trade name Terramycin). They are highly effective against most common bacteria, easy to take and believed to be relatively safe. However, it has been proved beyond doubt that the tetracyclines can cause immense



harm to the foetus when taken during pregnancy. Streptomycin is another commonly used drug which can damage the foetus. The drug is commonly used against tuberculosis, but taken during pregnancy it can lead to the baby being deaf from birth. Today there are other anti-tuberculosis drugs available — which have no ill-effects on the foetus even on prolonged intake by the mother.

Another common antibiotic, chloromphenicol, commonly sold under the trade name chloromycetin, and prescribed for typhoid, intestinal and urinary tract infections, has been shown to cause the disease called "gray baby syndrome" when administered in late pregnancy.

Sulfonamides (Elkosin, Orisul) of various types have been with us for quite some time and have been widely used for chest and urinary infections. But when administered during pregnancy they may cause severe jaundice, leading to brain damage and death of the child.

Penicillin on the other hand is one of the few antibiotics safe for the pregnant woman. Another safe antibiotic is Erythromycin. There in however no information as yet on penicillin derivatives like Ampicillin and Amoxycillin.

Malaria is very common in this country and the pregnant woman suffering from malaria faces the problem of deciding which drug to take. It has now been proved beyond doubt that quinine affects the eye and ear structure of the foetus, chloroquine is suspected of causing deafness and internal bleeding in the eye. The same is true of other anti-malarial drugs too. So the only course open to the physician attending on her is to find out whether malformations in the foetus have been caused and if so to advise abortion.

Metronidazole (commonly sold as "Flagyl") is used to treat amoebiasis, the scourge of the tropics, and some vaginal infections in women. The drug has been in use for several years now, but in a recent test the drug was found to cause mutations. When taken in the first three months, it was found to cause malformations in four infants out of 55.

Contemporary medicine uses hormonal or anti-hormonal preparations for the treatment of several disorders. In the pregnant state, the female hormones oestrogen and progesterone are commonly used for two purposes — to prevent abortion or to test whether a woman is pregnant. Studies to see if these have any harmful effects on the foetus have shown that heart defects were much higher than normal in babies of women who have used these hormone preparations.

Drugs containing oestrogen and progesterone either singly or in combination (Orasecron, Cumorits Oral, Secrodyl, E.P. Forte) are widely in use in this country for pregnancy tests. This test works on the principle that if a woman misses a period and its cause is anything other than pregnancy, a high dose of oestrogen or progesterone given over three days and stopped abruptly can induce a period. Though this test has a high degree of reliability, research has proved that the administration of these drugs can cause severe heart or limb malformations or lead to heart defects. The use of hormones for pregnancy testing has been banned in the West, but in India where other methods of testing are not available, too costly or inconvenient, there are doctors who still use these drugs for this purpose on their patients.

A synthetic hormone of the oestrogen group named stilbesterol commonly used to prevent abortion and in menstrual disorders is also a major hazard. When given to a pregnant mother, the hormone enters the circulation of the foetus and causes some changes in the uterine cervix of the female foetus making the children highly susceptible to cancer of the cervix, at very young ages. The male foetus also undergoes some structural or functional changes in the testes. The intake of the drug is therefore absolute taboo during pregnancy.

Some birth control pills contain small amounts of male hormones to increase their efficacy and decrease side-effects. If a woman happens to take these even after she is pregnant either because she does not know she is pregnant or because of prescriptions for hormonal support, she runs the grave risk of causing abnormalities in genital growth and development in the child because of the direct effect of the hormone on the foetus. Similarly, women who have been infertile and have taken the drug clomiiphene to enhance ovulation, and continue to do so after pregnancy run the risk of giving birth to children with gross mental and physical deformities or may be pushed into an abortion by the drug.

Continued on page 20

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SCHOOLING FOR PREGNANCY

"I led a normal, active life, ate sensibly and delivered a bonny son. I was schooled to believe I had contractions and not pain during labour. Pregnancy no longer means nausea and pain," asserts

Uma Kumbera Nain

As a young girl, the word "pregnancy" never once evoked a pleasurable thought in me. I always regarded pregnancy with distaste and actual childbirth as even worse! Whenever (on very rare occasions) I did think of it, I imagined myself looking absolutely grotesque, helpless and endlessly sick. Listening to the experiences of 99 per cent of mothers didn't help either. They made it sound like a herculean task. Even though all of them said it was great to be a mother, the actual path to it didn't sound too easy from their experiences.

So eventually when I became pregnant I was determined to overcome all my emotional hurdles and to make the experience as pleasant as I possibly could. However, I realized that though I had heard so much and read about pregnancy in general, my ignorance regarding the many phases of pregnancy and actual delivery was appalling. I started reading everything I could lay my hands on, but none of the books satisfied all my queries regarding exercises, muscle toning, etc. during pregnancy which would help in making childbirth easier. Working in the health club, I was obsessed with physical activity, and not doing very much in that sphere was getting me depressed, besides which I was scared of gaining more weight than necessary.

Finally I went to Dr. Kamal Jain, my gynaecologist, with all my queries and she patiently answered even the most stupid ones. She said that if one feels normal and healthy one could continue to indulge in all activity, including swimming, until such time as I started feeling the discomfort. I had already decided that I would work till the last day, to which she heartily agreed, being a very active working woman herself. It was at this session that she suggested I join the ante-natal classes held by the Breach Candy hospital physiotherapy department. I promptly enrolled myself and have never regretted it.

I will never forget the first session we had with Dr. Naik at the B.C.A. She made the entire process of childbirth sound like a beautiful experience. She also told us never to think of labour as pain but to call them contractions and that word really struck home because when I began labour I kept thinking of the contractions. During the duration of each contraction and the interval between them never did I once think of it as pain.

From then on I really began looking forward to our child's arrival with greater enthusiasm. They also held one session for both the parents which I thought was very helpful for the father-to-be. It makes the father feel part of the whole affair instead of feeling like an outsider. He is allowed to stay with the mother all through labour and through delivery if he desires. So, after this session for the couples my husband Nainy felt more informed in that field, and we both started counting the weeks and days for September 22 to arrive which was given as the due date.

At the ante-natal classes we were taught exercises to tone up those muscles which would be utilised during labour and childbirth, and also the art of relaxation by tensing and relaxing the entire body. But the most important were the breathing techniques. We were taught how to breathe during the different phases (contractions) of labour which are:

Effacement: During this the cervix is softened and thinned.

Dilatation: The opening of the cervix (the longest period of labour).

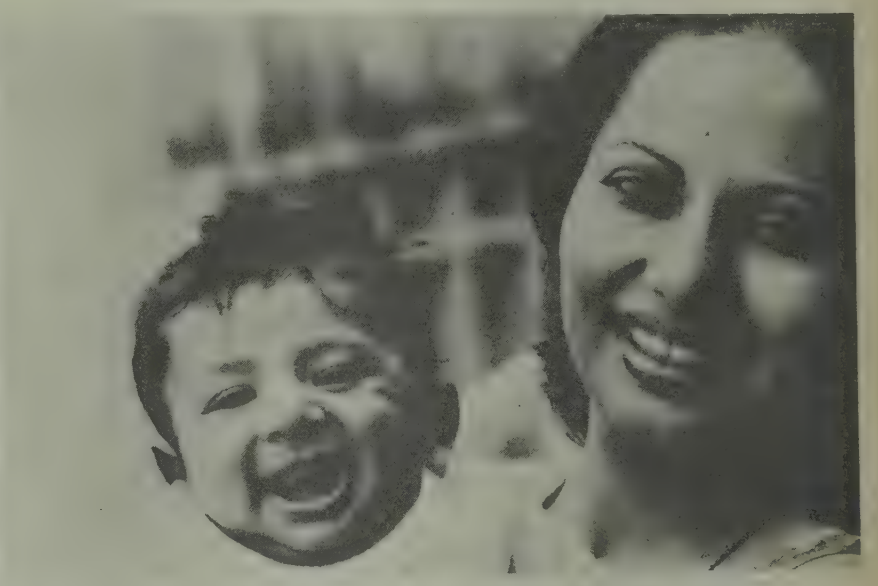
Transition: Further opening the cervix and pushing of the baby to the birth canal (extremely strong contractions).

Expulsion: Expelling of the baby from the uterus.

Once you understand the different phases of labour and the different types of contractions with it, the entire labour process becomes more manageable as one is aware of what is happening every minute. I practised all the exercises as well as the breathing techniques very regularly. Throughout my pregnancy I had not taken a day's sick leave and I was working from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. almost everyday.

As the due date was fast approaching all my well-wishers were full of advice. One question common with most of them was "Is your mother or mother-in-law coming?" When the answer was "No," they were more than surprised. In fact, some of them were shocked! Both Nainy and I had decided from the start that as it was our baby we jolly well would go through the pleasure and the pain attached to pregnancy instead of making the old people go through sleepless nights, headaches and heartaches. In this day and age when medical science has advanced so much there is no need to get panicky and nervous. We also decided that later, if we felt that we couldn't manage, we could employ a day and night nurse for a while, but luckily the need did not arise. As we neared D-day, some of my friends asked whether I was nervous. Some of the more exper-

IT'S A SHARED EXPERIENCE



That's how Devika and Suresh Bhojwani felt about the new arrival. And in the process they both went through an experience that can only be described as beautiful

Charming and vivacious Devika Bhojwani swears by the Lamaze technique which not only helped her tremendously during her pregnancy and childbirth, but also brought her closer to her husband Suresh. "The intimacy and the close relationship that we shared," Devika reminisced happily, "while I practised the breathing and relaxation patterns (of the Lamaze technique) was a fantastic reward in itself."

Devika confesses that initially she too was quite apprehensive about child birth and therefore preferred not to think about it. Her first pregnancy was by no means free from problems. She went through the usual nausea and discomfort. Now she admits that this was "because I thought that pregnant women had to go through these stages. I was conditioned psychologically. Then after I mastered the Lamaze technique I had no trouble at all during my second pregnancy."

Special permission had been given by Dr. Motashaw, one of Bombay's leading gynaecologists, for Suresh to be present at the time of delivery. That further increased Devika's confidence and she felt reassured that even if she should slacken or forget her breathing routine during childbirth, Suresh would be there to help her.

Basically, this technique erases the picture that women have about how terrible childbirth is, stories about agony, painful moans, exhaustion, and a variety of other such sufferings.

The Lamaze method helps the woman to work with her labour and delivery, thus training the body and mind to control and direct the birth of the baby. It provides a thorough insight into women's physiological and mental processes; how the baby develops from conception to birth, and how nature has shaped the body to cope with the growth and actual delivery. This technique also explains about the muscles involved in the actual delivery. It teaches that because of fear the woman tenses the muscles and causes the very pain she fears so much. So relaxed muscles and an effective type of breathing during each phase of labour, helps rather than hinder delivery, and the baby emerges with ease.

When Devika went through the final moment and when she knew that the baby had eased through, it was a memorable feeling of closeness and accomplishment, a feeling that led to her second pregnancy not too long after. The help and encouragement of her husband in the second pregnancy had been there once again, when dew-eyed Devika experienced one of the most creative events of her life.

Lalita Uttamsingh

ienced told me that I would be moaning with pain and cursing my husband for what he had done to me, which I thought was a bit foolish because it wasn't entirely my husband's idea to have the baby. It was a joint decision.

During the ninth month I was visiting Dr. Jain every week and she kept me informed of the progress of the foetus inside me. She drew diagrams and showed me the baby's various positions at different times. She made me and my husband listen to baby's heart beats.

Except for a bit of fluctuation in my blood pressure my health was better than it ever was. I had gained about 12 kg., two kilos more than I had intended to. During the last week, I was literally counting the days, my bag was packed and I was ready to move into the hospital any time.

At last September 21 arrived and that was my last working day as next day was the date for the BIG arrival. As usual, I did all my routine work plus my exercises. I had planned to leave for home early that day, but it got later than usual as there was a lot of work to be completed before I took off to enjoy my three months' maternity leave.

Next morning dawned as usual. It was a Monday which was our normal day off. So Nainy was also at home and it was my doctor's visiting day. When he met her, after examining me she said that I would deliver perhaps within the next 24 hours, although there were no signs of contractions at that time. After leaving her clinic we did a bit of last minute shopping, got home, added the finishing touches to the baby's room, had a nice large lunch and I decided to rest a bit as my blood pressure was still high, besides which I was feeling a bit tired.

Around 4 p.m. I felt a faint contraction in the uterus. I ignored it as all along the ninth month one gets these contractions from time to time. Nearer to five o'clock, I felt the same thing. I got a bit suspicious, so I decided to time the next one. I was thrown off balance despite all my readings, because I thought the contractions would arrive like giant waves! The next one arrived around 5.30 and lasted about 10 seconds. I then decided to call the doctor and ask her what I should do. She told me to keep timing the contractions and the intervals between them and to call her again. After an hour or so when the contractions began arriving every half hour and lasting from seven to ten seconds, I called the doctor again. She said to leave for the hospital around 10 p.m. But soon after that the contractions started getting closer — every 20 minutes and lasting from 10 to 15 seconds. So we decided to have dinner and move. I had a bath and ate a good dinner. All along I was practising my breathing for the first phase, so I never once realised the "pain." Even at the dining table I was timing the contractions and breathing. Everyone at the table (by then my two sisters had arrived) was quite amazed at my calmness because I continued to laugh and joke with them after the contractions had eased.

We arrived at the hospital at 9 p.m. By then the contractions had become more frequent, i.e. every seven to ten minutes and lasting from 30 seconds to 69 seconds. I was feeling fairly relaxed due to my breathing. I had already informed Dr. Jain of the progress and that I would be at the hospital by 9 p.m. She had asked me to tell the nurses to prepare me for delivery as soon as I got there, which they did.

After that my contractions were coming every one to two minutes and lasting much longer. I knew I had gone into the second stage of labour. So I started my shallow breathing remembering to relax at the same time. This took some effort. I was changing position every few minutes. Nainy and one of my sisters were with me all along. Nainy's presence and his stroking my face and back definitely helped me a great deal as these contractions were harder to manage.

By 10 p.m. Dr. Jain arrived and looking at her beaming smile made me forget my contractions for a while. I had now gone into the third stage of labour, i.e. transition, because I was beginning to feel the urge to push and I could feel the baby's head in the birth canal. After Dr. Jain examined me for progress she said that I had already dilated to three fingers and wanted me transferred to the delivery room. I was busy with the light rapid breathing, and relaxation was becoming exceedingly difficult as the normal reflex is to make the body rigid when the contractions begin. Here again, the presence of Nainy helped a great deal plus Dr. Jain's physical and moral support.

By 10.30 I was in the delivery room and my last stage,

Continued on page 54

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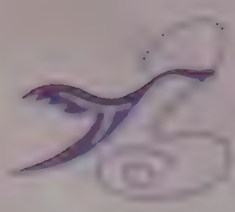

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SHOULD LABOUR PAINS BE EASED WITH ANAESTHETICS ?

By Dr. Nargesh Motashaw, as told to Vijaya Prem Subramony

When a woman is expecting her first child, along with the joy of becoming a mother, is the fear of the pain involved with pregnancy. Some women have the power to endure pain, others have an extremely low threshold. Half the fears of the traumas of childbirth of an expectant mother are because of ignorance. The other half is because of the gory stories fed to her by various "well wishers". Mrs. Sitaram, a young attractive woman of 28, is a confidential secretary in a well-known pharmaceutical firm. She married late, and was eager to have her first child soon. At the same time, she had been told that as she was no longer young, her muscles would be tight and unyielding and she would have to suffer excruciating pain during childbirth. This of course is untrue. Needless to say, when she came to see me, she was a bundle of nerves.

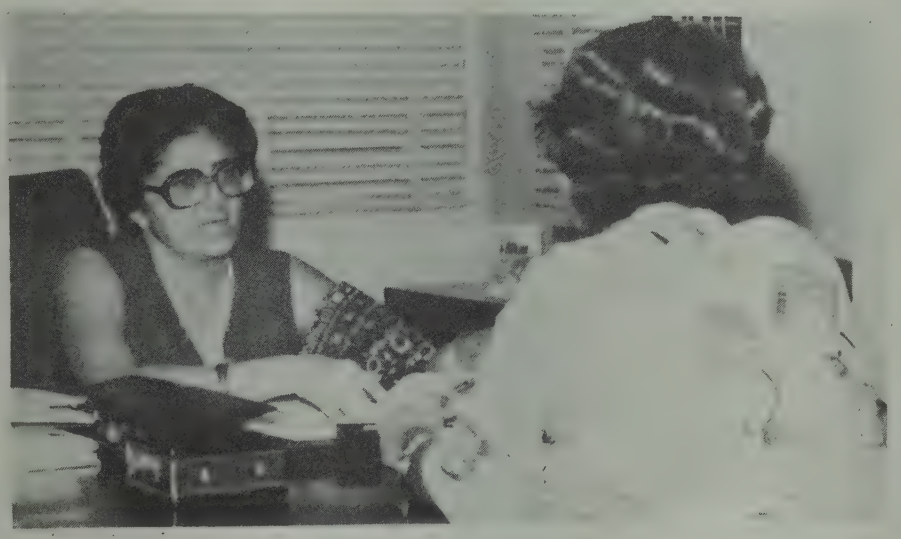
I explained to her that although painkillers were used in surgical operations since 1846, it was not until 1928 that these were introduced and applied in the field of obstetrics. I assured Mrs. Sitaram that today, she is lucky enough to have access to such things as laughing gas (nitrous oxide in equal proportion with oxygen) which make childbirth almost painless. More recently, epidural and spinal injections (both administered into the patient's spine through different membranes) have been introduced as speedy pain removers.

Although epidural was popular in the United States more than 10 years ago, it is being widely used in India only now. This is because unlike some of the previous drugs that caused complications, epidural is comparatively safe because it does not cause any after effects.

Mrs. Sitaram had read somewhere that it was not safe to interfere with nature. I assured her that this was a mistaken belief, probably because of early man's condemnation that the fall of man was caused by Eve, the temptress, and that one of the punishments accorded her was the pain of childbirth. I firmly believe that if the patient is psychologically unprepared to endure labour pain and is in a state of mental tension, epidural or any other pain reliever would be a boon to her. A tense mind leads to a tense cervix, and epidural can help in quickening the process of labour.

I explained in detail the whole process. The timing of the epidural injection is very important. The drug is usually injected only when labour is well established, that is, when the cervical dilatation is between 3 and 5 cm. wide. When administered correctly and at the proper time, the patient goes through a fairly painless labour. The drug merely kills the sensation of pain in the patient without interfering with the uterine contractions. However, about 80 per cent of patients need extra help such as the vacuum extractor or forceps for the final removal of the baby. Of course, such help is very often necessary these days even for those who go through the natural labour process. Epidural can be administered in two ways. The first is the single shot epidural which is normally sufficient for a patient having her second or third baby. The other is the continuous epidural which is necessary for the woman who is having her first baby.

Mrs. Sitaram had also heard vague and disquieting rumours that epidural, if not properly administered, could cause spinal paralysis in the mother. I hastened to assure her that this was just not possible with epidural because the injection is extradural. An overdose of other spinally-administered painkillers have caused paralysis and even death of the patient, but in very, very rare cases.



"I firmly believe that if the patient is psychologically unprepared to endure labour pain and is in a state of mental tension, epidural or any other pain reliever would be a boon to her."

But before she got too enthusiastic, I warned Mrs. Sitaram that I would not recommend administering an epidural for her labour until I had thoroughly examined her. For instance, if I found that she suffered from constant low blood pressure, or if she had any skin infection in the back area (by which the infection could spread), or if she were under shock due to other causes, or if the baby's head was found to be too big for the mother's pelvis (in which case extra effort would be needed to push the baby out), I'm afraid epidural would be out for her.

As it is, even under normal circumstances, I explained that the patient had to be under medical surveillance every second while under the effects of epidural. The patient's blood pressure, pulse and the foetal heartbeats have to be continuously checked and electronically monitored, if possible. Otherwise, there is a danger of the patient's blood pressure falling rapidly, adversely affecting both mother and baby, which could even be fatal. This is why the obstetrician or anaesthesiologist has to supervise continuously and take remedial measures when necessary. This is one of the reasons why epidurals are not readily available in many hospitals, because they lack the facilities to offer constant supervision.

Mrs. Sitaram agreed with me when I said that even with all these advances in medical science, the best analgesic for any expectant mother today is the comforting presence of her obstetrician. A good doctor prepares her patient to accept without fear the natural process of childbirth right from the first month. The patient-doctor relationship based on trust is very important here. I'm sorry to say that doctors like me are most hindered in our job by the friends, neighbours, aunts and even mothers of the patient who frighten the poor woman out of her wits with terrible descriptions of pain to be endured during labour.

In this connection, I am happy to say that many hospitals and even some private obstetricians today are placing great emphasis on educating young, vulnerable women like Mrs. Sitaram with the aid of slides and lectures on the birth process. I referred Mrs. Sitaram to a well-known hospital in Bombay that teaches the Lamaze method (see page 16) of preparing an expectant mother for childbirth. Under this system, both the husband and wife are not only required to attend ante-natal classes, but the husband is also required to be present throughout his wife's labour and the final birth of the child. In fact, this system has become so popular in the States that most women in that country prefer this natural method of delivery rather than resorting to the use of epidural anaesthesia.

Dr. Nargesh Motashaw, M.D., F.R.C.S., F.A.C.S., F.I.C.S., is an eminent gynaecologist and obstretrician. Among the many honorary posts she holds, Dr. Motashaw is President of the Indian Association of Gynaecological Endoscopists, President of the Bombay Obstetric and Gynaecological Society and member of the Ethical Committee of the Institute for Research in Reproduction.

WARNING: SOME DRUGS ARE DANGEROUS IF YOU ARE PREGNANT

Continued from page 13

Besides sex hormones, other hormonal preparations could also be dangerous. The commonly used adrenal hormones (corticosteroids) are known to cause congenital defects in the child if taken during the first three months of pregnancy. If given in late pregnancy, this drug can cause failure of natural production of the adrenal hormones and death of the newborn. Since this drug is used for a wide variety of conditions, from allergies to asthma, consumers should be aware of these hazards.

The thyroid hormone thyroxin can cause similar acute deficiency in the newborn. Iodine and other anti-thyroid drugs cross into the foetal circulation easily and will cause the child to be born with thyroid swelling. Since the mother in this case must take recourse to these drugs for her condition, achieving a delicate balance of dosage that is adequate for her and non-toxic to the foetus becomes a taxing problem. Radio-active Iodine used for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes crosses into the foetal circulation and can destroy the child's thyroid if given after 12 weeks of intrauterine life.

Luckily, none of the anti-diabetes drugs — insulin or the oral ones — have been proved to cause congenital deformities.

PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS

In a world full of stresses and strains there has been an alarming rise in the use of drugs. And the pregnant woman may find herself slipping into unwanted mental problems and pop in a pill or two for relaxation and mental peace. How safe are these?

Diazepam (Calmpose) is the most commonly used drug in this country for psychiatric disturbances. It causes mental calmness and induces sleep. And studies have shown that diazepam ingestion raised the chances of cleft palate in the newborn six-fold.

The other commonly used mood elevator, amphetamine (dexedrine), which drives away sleep, reduces appetite and improves the thought processes has been proved to cause severe heart defects, liver malformations and cleft-palate in new borns if taken in early pregnancy. Two other drugs, meprobamate and chlordiazepoxide, have been shown to cause mental retardation in the unborn child. Lithium carbonate, another such drug, is known to cause physical and mental problems. The phenothiazines (largactil, Siquil) one of the oldest group of drugs used for treating psychiatric disorders, have also been proved to be dangerous to the unborn child. Barbiturates are perhaps the safest for barring a slight tendency to excessive bleeding as it has no ill-effects on the child.

ANTI-VOMITING DRUGS

Morning sickness is a peculiar syndrome in pregnancy believed to be a consequence of the high level of circulating hormones in the pregnant woman. It occurs in the first three months of pregnancy and some women use drugs to avoid it. This is also the period of maximum damage to the foetus and hence the drugs used must be selected with care.

Promethazine (Avomine), prochloperazine (Stemetril), Meclizine and Benedictin are the common drugs prescribed for vomiting during pregnancy. While the first two have shown some possible risks, a recent report from Britain states that a child is believed to be suffering from ill effects, viz. deformities, following the consumption of Benedictin by the mother during pregnancy. Ingestion of the phenothiazines also increases the possibility of neonatal jaundice, says another report.

Similarly, many women take pain killers like aspirin during their pregnancy for headache, body ache or flu. The ingestion of aspirin or metacin is to be avoided during the first three months of pregnancy and later Crocin is safer.

OTHER COMMON DRUGS

Women suffering from epilepsy are usually put on drugs for years together and cessation of their intake may lead to recurrence of epileptic attacks. Phenobarbitone is the safest anti-epileptic drug available with no report of any harmful effects on the foetus. Diphenylhydantoin, the other drug commonly used, is known to cause severe mental retardation and physical defects in a large group of children studied whose mothers took the drug during pregnancy. Trimethadione, the drug used for petitmal epilepsy, is also associated with congenital defects in the newborn.

The anti-coagulant warfarin, used to treat blood disorders, causes fatal foetal haemorrhage on entering the foetal circulation. If given in early pregnancy it can cause mental retardation and blindness.

Is anaesthesia safe during pregnancy? Modern anaesthetic methods have improved so vastly that a person can be rendered unconscious for a length of time ranging from a few minutes to a few hours with precision and accuracy. Short-term anaesthetics (generally used on pregnant woman) have proved to cause no harm to the unborn child.

The commonest drugs used to control hypertension are diuretics (which reduce salt content) and Reserpine. The former have been found to cause reduction of blood production in the foetus and if the latter is taken just before delivery it can cause drowsiness and nasal stuffiness in the newborn child.

Among the most dangerous are the drugs used against cancer. The anti-cancer drugs which act against rapidly multiplying cells in the woman and drastically reduce their growth reach the embryo through the blood and does the same thing there too. The result: all sorts of gross malformations like missing limbs, eyes, kidneys and defects of the nervous system. Pregnancy should therefore be avoided when on anti-cancer drugs.

SOCIALLY ACCEPTED "MEDICATION"

Most people believe that vitamins cannot cause harm, but a high intake of vitamin A may cause foetal malformations of the urinary tract, cleft palate and eye damage. Excessive intake of vitamin D can lead to defects in heart valves and mental retardation. Excessive intake of vitamin K causes liver damage.

Too much consumption of alcohol during pregnancy has been found to lead to the newborn with an IQ lower than 79 (moronic), eye defects, joint defects and heart defects in 25 per cent.

Smoking is known to cause retardation of the growth of the foetus in the womb There is also definite evidence that the chances of still-birth are higher for the smoking woman. This is believed to be because of the tar and nicotine contents of cigarettes.

The Food and Drugs Administration of the US Government recently announced that caffeine, present in coffee, tea chocolate, cocoa and cola drinks besides many drug formulations, causes missing toes when fed in large amounts to pregnant rats. FDA has warned pregnant women to reduce their intake of beverages containing caffeine.

The use of narcotics (morphine, pethidine, cocain, etc.) both habitually and for relief of pain in labour does not cause any physical defects in the child But on the other hand, narcotics are depressants of the nervous and respiratory systems and if excessive intake occurs, the child may not breathe, or in a difficult labour, the respiratory problem may get aggravated because of these drugs. Fortunately narcotic antagonists that act within minutes are available to undo these ill-effects, but if the child does not breathe for a long time Irreversible brain damage is caused.

There are very strong indications that LSD can cause limb deformities in a foetus. The problem is all the more serious when one considers that most drug addicts use more than one drug or use substitutes when the drug of their choice is not available so that several systems may be simultaneously affected.

WHAT IS THE REMEDY?

In view of the fact that such a large number of drugs can cause foetal damages how does a pregnant woman to know which drugs to take?

The answer to this is that pregnant women should take drugs only under strict medical supervision. Every woman must make it a point to reveal to her attending physician whenever a period is delayed. She should ask herself before taking a drug whether she cannot put up with a mild headache or feeling of depression, rather than gobble up a tablet and expose her precious child in the womb to the possibility of serious defects.

Self-medication is particularly hazardous and the pregnant woman should consult her obstetrician before taking any drug, even the most common "household" remedies. At the same time, it becomes the duty of every doctor to keep abreast of the latest findings about drugs.

In this context it is best to keep in mind what Overbach and Rodman say in their 'Drugs Used with Neonates and During Pregnancy'. "Drugs administered to pregnant women during any stage of gestation or to infants in the early postnatal period can have unexpected toxic effects. This need not mean that pregnant women should be deprived of drug therapy. But drugs should be prescribed and given cautiously, and the patients watched with particular care to avoid drug-induced catastrophes in the newborn."

A NOVEL TECHNIQUE

Murli Lahoti and his artist wife Lata, from Pune, held an exhibition of their metal paintings in Bombay. They create forms and figures in metal and arrange these on canvas fixing them securely. Murli is a master of this novel technique and the result is unique as you can see.

He is a winner of several awards and has a number of exhibitions to his credit. His subjects are inspired mainly by rural life and Hindu mythology. Murli is adept in stylisation. His creations are marked by his command over the use of colours and perfect sense of balance and composition.

ABOVE : Under the Sun

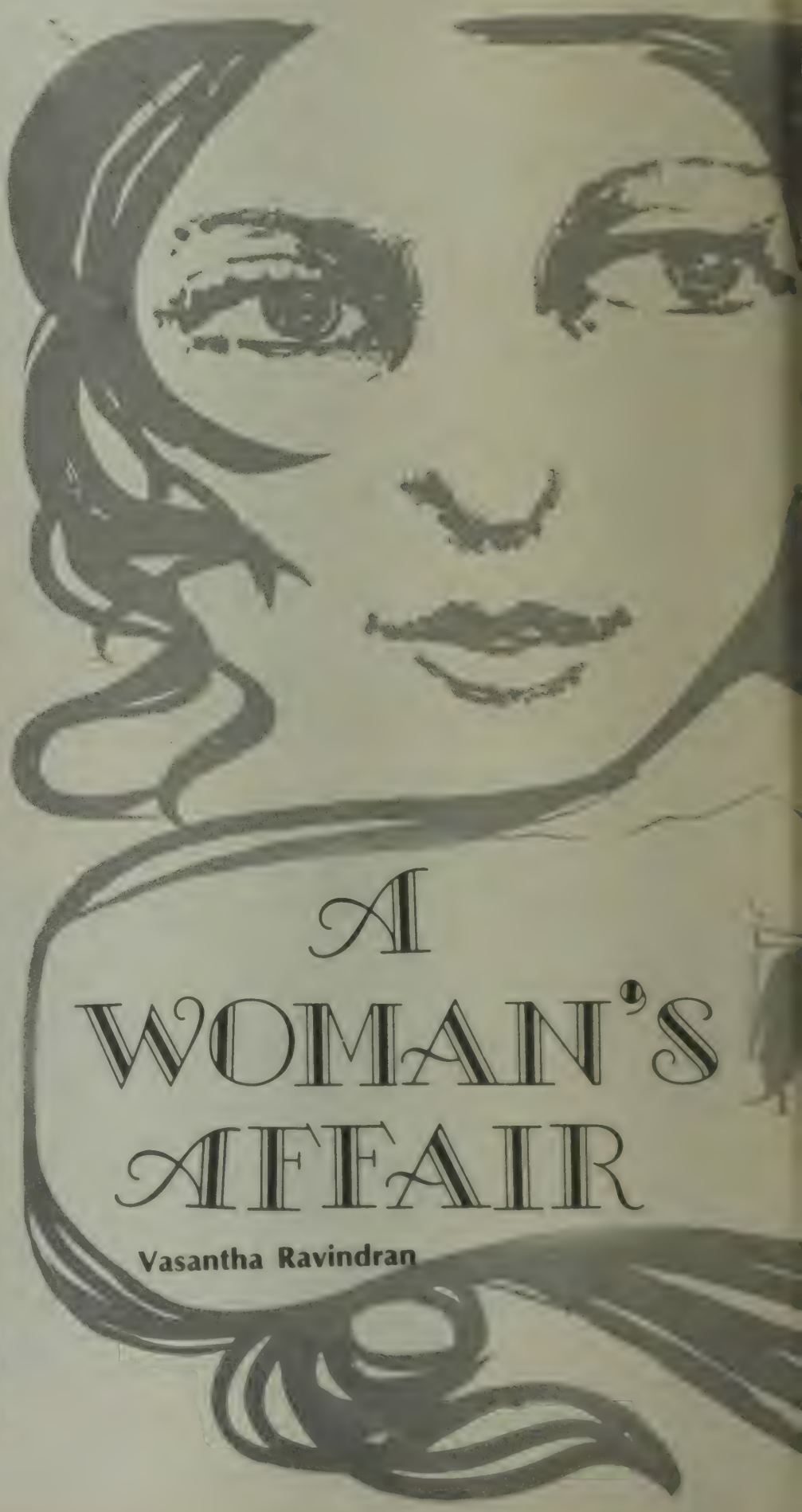
ABOVE RIGHT: Lord Ganesha

RIGHT: Breaths of Freedom

Photographs : Tasveb Badshah

A WOMAN'S AFFAIR

Vasantha Ravindran



WHEN Vijay came home to his flat upstairs he found by the locked door that Sneha hadn't yet arrived. When she did, she always had the door slightly ajar — and a cup of tea ready, hot and sweet, the way he liked it. He took off his tie, threw it on the settee, and then eased off his shoes. That's better, he told himself. He'd had a cup of coffee at the canteen so there was no need to make himself a cup. Without Sneha the flat seemed empty, devoid of personality as if she were the catalyst who brought it alive with the warmth of her presence.

So much for the dire predictions of well-wishers who had foretold disaster when he had moved in with Sneha; not that he wasn't ready to marry her — he was ready, willing and able. It was Sneha who had dissented. who believed that there was something about matrimony that soured affection and put it on trial. Of course, they had their unspoken agreement — each was to have complete freedom personally to live their own lives, not to interfere, and, of course, each had the freedom to walk out should any contingency arise.

After three years Vijay was sure that no such thing would arise. He was sure of her. She had her moods, this he accepted. A semi-genius, he told himself, is not like other people, but otherwise she was as good and homeloving as a conventional wife. Of course, he had to agree not to have children, not to bring progeny into a ruthless, cruel, polluted world, depleted of resources and already teeming with more millions than it could support. One of these days, he hoped, her instincts would get the better of her, but he doubted whether she'd find the time either to have a child or look after it. She worked in an advertising firm, 10-4; she also acted in stage plays; she played the guitar quite professionally, and she was the brightest star in the Women's Lib movement of their town.

He went in to have a wash, and when he came back, wiping his face on the Turkish towel, he knew that Sneha was back. The house had become magically alive. He could hear the hiss of the electric kettle and presently she came, two cups of tea on a tray.

He knew all her moods by now, by the way she kept tossing her head and by the glint in her eyes (he could swear that they turned green with fury sometimes just like a provoked cat's did) for example. She gave him his tea and then sat on her chair.

"Yes, what is it?" he asked her.

"I told you, didn't I?"

Yes. She had said something about a girl who had an abortion and got the sack, but he hadn't been listening, he was thinking of something else.

"Yes," he said, "but what has happened now?"

"Nothing new. I don't think you were listening. You had a glazed look even then. Anyway it is a woman's affair."

"A woman's affair?" he asked suddenly feeling for some reason queasy.

"Yes, I told you even then. There is this girl. She works in a college. I won't mention names because it doesn't really matter. It is the principle that matters. This girls' college authorities, I mean the board of trustees, the Principal, and the rest, mostly the holier-than-thou types..."

He knew that a joke would not go down very well at this stage. So he listened carefully, "and then...."

"No. I'm just coming to the point. This girl, incidentally, she teaches English and comes, shall we say, of a poor but respectable family. She had an unfortunate affair, the chap had promised to marry her and she allowed him to go all the way."

"And then, I suppose he changed his mind."

"Yes, she was a fool. He was already married and when she said she was expecting he just left her."

"So what's up now?"

"The girl had an abortion and went back to her job. Only the job wasn't there, they'd sacked her..."

"She'll get another one no doubt soon enough. Her academic qualifications are there."

"She'll get one, but that's not what is bothering us. She shouldn't lose her job. I mean, the man didn't lose his job, did he? And he was equally to blame. We have decided to make this a test case, an issue."

"What can you do?"

"We can create a lot of adverse publicity for the college concerned, rake up old scandals worse than this."

"But..." He wanted to tell her this didn't concern her but something made him keep quiet.

"Also a few of us, respectable women, pillars of society, we are going to confess."

"Confess to what?" he asked but apparently she hadn't heard.

"The poor girl couldn't do anything else. I mean, she has to support her father, put her brother through college and she just couldn't afford to have the child..."

He didn't know what to say. Her tea was by her chair and must have been quite cold now. He remembered that his friends had been sceptical from the beginning.

"It won't work. She's a genius but the dividing line between genius and madness is very thin," they had said.

He thought of his sister's warning. "Of all the..." she'd said when she heard of Sneha. "What do you know of her, her past...?"

"I don't mind, it's the future that matters. For that matter my

past too is not as pure as the driven snow," he had countered.

"It is different for a man," she'd pointed out.

In her own way his sister had tried to put a spoke in the wheel. In the middle of a conversation she'd suddenly insert a piece of juicy gossip about Sneha.

"She was, what's his name, that avant garde director's girl friend."

SHE LOOKED AT HIM BUT DIDN'T SEE HIM, AND HE KNEW THAT SHE WOULD GO AHEAD AND DO EXACTLY WHAT SHE WANTED. HE COULD ONLY HAVE HER ON HER TERMS OR NOT AT ALL

Vijay would be ruffled, in fact he knew about the affair. Sneha himself had told him about it. But to his sister he said coldly, "You know how people gossip.

Sneha and that man shared the same interests."

There were other things that his sister tried to tell him — one was that a bird of such exotic plumage couldn't be expected to settle down to a drab housewife's existence. But for each objection he had a reply. The only thing that had resulted from his sister's misguided zeal to protect him from Sneha was that he was estranged from her — his sister — not Sneha. He rarely visited her now, and when he did, it was very cold and formal. He never took Sneha with him. Not that she would have minded coming along, but he didn't want to put her in an embarrassing position. Some of his friends too had made sly digs at him. This too had not deterred him from his move to live with Sneha. Quite the contrary. He'd dropped all those who he felt did not approve of Sneha.

And personally he had nothing to grumble about. At heart she was as much a woman as any middle class wife. This Woman's Lib of hers was only a flag of defiance to flaunt in the face of the world. Of course she herself had told him of the affair she'd had with the chap — that avant garde person — but he felt that she'd done it more out of defiance of convention that any passion for him. As if her virginity had been something to be ashamed of, and that chap had happened to come along. She'd spared him none of the details even though he had wanted to be spared. As she'd said honestly, "It is only right that you should know now than later."

She was a fabulous cook. Heaven knew where she'd the time to pick up these things in addition to her academic qualifications. Her Chinese cuisine was out of this world. In fact, their friends often joked that if Vijay and she lost their jobs they could make their fortune by opening a Chinese restaurant.

Now he looked across at her and at the cold cup of tea, a film of milk on top. "Your tea, it's cold," he told her. Sneha came to with a start.

"Oh, yes my tea," she said and made an effort to lift it to her lips.

"Oh, leave it alone," he said with some irritation. She was still miles away and he wanted to bring her back. "Yes, but what are you going to do about it?"

She looked at him, but he knew that she didn't really see him. Her mind was still with the girl who'd had the abortion. He wondered dully how the news had got to the authorities, a Judas no doubt, not hard to find in any group of employees.

And then Sneha was talking. "Oh yes, we have decided on our line of action; we are going to publicly confess to having had abortions ourselves..."

"Gosh, no!" he protested, startled.

"Yes," she insisted, "That's the only way to focus attention on the problem, you've heard, haven't you, of the woman's right to decide."

"No!" he repeated, more to himself. Sneha must be mad. He'd be cut by many of his old friends, puritan relatives; his sister would snigger, murmur cattily, "I told you so." He'd be the laughing stock of the town.

When she had told him about the abortion it hadn't mattered. To him it was an irrelevant detail of her past, like the typhoid that she'd had at ten or the measles she'd caught in her first year at college.

But now suddenly it became relevant and grim — a fact that could wreak havoc in his serene life. He did not even remember the chap, and it hadn't mattered. Sneha also had told him that had she loved the man, she'd have flaunted her pregnancy "like an achievement" (these were her words), but she'd got rid of it because she hadn't really cared for him and did not want to carry his child inside her.

He held his head in his hands. He must try to use all the power he had over her to dissuade her from this rash step.

"You can't do it," he said trying to make his voice firm.

She looked at him and didn't see him, and he knew that it was like talking to a stone; she'd go ahead and do exactly what she wanted and he could only have her on her terms or not at all.

GROWING UP

With growing children the problem of clothes is a perennial headache to parents. INDU BANKER and DATTA SHAH of "ITA Creations" help you to solve the problem with a new range of functional but pretty clothes for little girls under eight — dresses that are charming and cute — bright, pastel, florals — trimmed, appliqued or embroidered in comfortable and easily washable cottons that can stand a great deal of wear and tear. Here's a great opportunity for mothers to pick up pretty dresses for their daughters from the exhibition-cum-sale to be held by ITA Creations at Cymroza Art Gallery on January 7 and 8, 1981.

BELOW: Cute and charming trio — three dresses styed to suit the warm weather. Tiered, a-lined and gathered, perked-up with bias, lace and ribbon trimmings.

ABOVE: Happy and gay while at play — remnant of plain and printed fabric makes a smart skirt and blouse ensemble. Rick-rack and lace to enhance the style; pretty embroidered posies highlight the yoke of this attractive dress styled with butterfly sleeves and belted at waist.

IN STYLE

ABOVE: Casual and smart mixables — gingham and print cleverly matched with plain fabrics to make pretty apron style dresses for party or casual day-time wear.

Thrifty playwear — colourful jumpsuits in chintzy cotton with details of drawstring waist and shoulder tie-ups to allow free movement for your lively kids.

Photographs Taiyeb Badshah

YOUR NEW-BORN BABY... SOME DO'S & DON'TS

THE HIGH INFANT MORTALITY RATE IS OFTEN DUE TO IGNORANCE ON THE PART OF PARENTS OF CERTAIN BASIC FACTS ABOUT CHILD CARE

R. K. Anand

As a baby is vulnerable from the moment of conception, parents should know what causes such abnormal births so that they can prevent avoidable diseases and deaths.

German Measles

Rubella (German measles) contracted by a woman during the first three months of pregnancy can cause eye, heart, and/or mental ailments. This can be avoided by using a vaccine which can be given to children and women who are not pregnant but want to have a baby.

Hospital Risks

During one month, six babies delivered in one of the best hospitals of Bombay had staphylococcal skin infection. If ignored, this can lead to serious and at times fatal diseases. The likely reason is the new-born being fed artificial milk instead of breast milk which contains protective substances (antibodies). So it has less resistance and catches infections from germs in the hospital environment, from other babies in the nursery and from the nurses. A normal, new-born baby should not get even a drop of artificial milk in the hospital and in the first three months of its life. This is possible even for working mothers and mother's who deliver by caesarean section.

Vitamins and gripe water

Asha was breast-feeding her baby. When she was discharged from the hospital, she was asked to clean the tongue of the baby, give it gripe water, a preparation for bonny babies, two types of vitamin drops and water in between feeds. But her pediatrician advised her to the contrary. He said that cleaning of baby's tongue was harmful. And as she was taking a normal diet breast feeding alone was enough, there was no need of vitamins or other medicines, but if the climate was very hot, boiled and cooled water could be given with a spoon but not from a bottle. He suggested that baby's skin should be exposed to the morning sunlight for it to manufacture Vitamin D.

Early Problems

Once the baby had swelling of breasts. The mother was reassured that it was normal, that it should not be squeezed and should be left alone. One day the baby passed a dozen motions and on another, he did not pass motion for two days. Otherwise the baby looked normal, active and the motions too looked normal. On medical advice no medicine was given. It was explained to her that drugs given to such babies for so called "diarrhoea" and "constipation" can be harmful.

Grandma wanted to give some home remedies and apply surma to the baby's eyes. The doctor objected saying that he did not want to give the baby anything the composition of which he was not sure. And the Consumer Guidance Society of India has found 20 to 80 per cent of lead in the surmas sold in Bombay, which have been known to cause lead poisoning. Pacifiers to quieten a crying child can introduce infection in the mouth, and their use should be avoided.

Danger of Drugs

Asha did not know that babies sneeze normally, that they sometimes strain a little before passing motion or urine, that brandy given to a new-born can be harmful and that tetracycline preparations can be dangerous for children up to the age of seven years.

It is sad that companies which have stopped manufacturing tetracycline drops in their own countries continue to manufacture and sell these in our country. Months ago we heard that the Drug Controller proposed to ban the manufacture of liquid forms of all derivatives and brands of tetracyclines. We wonder if the vested interests of the multinationals as well as Indian manufacturers are delaying this much needed ban.

Baby Soaps, Powders and Oil

Certain highly expensive baby soaps, baby oils and baby powders supposed to be "specially meant for the tender skin of the baby" are often advertised. The truth is that any good bath soap and talcum powder would serve the purpose.

The pediatrician told the parents that B.C.G. must be given to their baby and that they should not believe the incomplete reports given in certain newspapers about the doubtful value of B.C.G. in protecting the baby against tuberculosis.

Clothing

Asha's maid-servant was very fond of keeping the baby wrapped all the time. This was discouraged so that the baby could exercise his limbs and was spared from heat rash. Babies should not be overclothed. Cotton cloth next to the skin is preferable. Sweating on the head during sleep is normal.

When Mother Falls Ill

When Asha got fever, her doctor rightly advised her to continue breast-feeding. It has been shown that in many infections the breast milk develops specific antibodies against the germs causing the infection in the mother. These antibodies protect the baby from catching the infection from the mother. If the mother is taking any drug for the ailment, she can breast-feed just before taking the drug.

After the baby's check-up at one month, the doctor told the smiling parents, "Would you now agree that baby care is very simple? We unnecessarily make it complicated. **Breast-feeding with love is all that a new-born baby needs.**"

Dr. R. K. Anand is Honorary Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the Topiwala National Medical College, Bombay, and Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh.

Mona Bannerji

not just soup and hamburgers

. . . which is what, according to popular belief, Americans eat. Not so. Like the immigrants whom the country has nurtured, the food is varied, imaginative and colourful. Even a busy, kitchen-avoiding housewife has lots of choices

Contrary to the conclusion I had reached after seeing scores of American movies, most Americans do not subsist on a diet of hamburgers and hot dogs purchased at fast-food stores. Cooking is still an art that most American women, and a growing number of men cultivate carefully and patiently. In a mobile and classless society, being a reputable gourmet is one's sure claim to modern day aristocracy.

America is not a meat and potato country like most European countries are. Though it is a predominantly meat consuming country, there are as many ways to dress meat here as there are immigrants who are fed into this culture. The French introduced the Cuisinart to Americans, and the Japanese showed them how to use La Machine to prepare delicate meat dishes. Italian mothers with large families to feed opened the eyes of the rich Texans to the economy of meatball dinners. The Middle Eastern community immediately took up the cause and showed these people how to spice up these meatballs into koftas and kormas.

Food here is definitely not bland, thanks to the Polish and Hungarian people who brought their ghoulash and paprika along with them to their new land. For the more adventurous palates the Italians supplied hot red pepper, hotter than anything we are used to in India. And then there are the little yellow Mexican peppers, one bite of which can lead the uninitiated through all the agonies of hell. Compared to these the paprica is quite harmless, adding a bright red colour to the food, and the mildest of flavours.

Today in the United States beef is the staple diet, but it was not like this two hundred years ago. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Americans subsisted mainly on game, paying little attention to agriculture. There was little initiative to stoop to backbreaking labour of tilling fields, when the forests were swarming with meat, and the rivers full of fish.

That tradition continues into the festive foods of today. Americans celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas with turkey, and Easter with ham. They usher in the New Year with champagne, and any old food that will help soak the drink inside their stomach. Actually they are most festive in summer when families gather from all over the country for picnics and backyard barbecues. Here ribs and humungous spiced sausages reign supreme. As they sizzle and smoke on the grills the aroma emanating from them can make a whole neighbourhood feel hungry. Fortunately grilled meat and salad do not do any harm to most diets.

American gastronomic history began with the "Indian triad," the three vegetables most easily available to the American Indians: squash, beans, and maize. Beans, anthropologists have proved, was cultivated in this land as far back as seven thousand years ago. As subsequent waves of people came to displace the Indians, this country became a culinary jigsaw puzzle until it became impossible to distinguish the pieces of the puzzle any more, and everything got thrown into the American melting pot. Still, there are a few broad belts, such as the German style of the North, the Tex-Mex food of the South West, the French cooking of Louisiana, and the Creole dishes of the other Southern States. This last cooking is a cheerful mixture of French, African, Indian, and Spanish cuisines delightfully free of any Anglo-Saxon restrictions.

With so many delightful varieties of food to choose from, the average American is constantly fighting the battle of the bulge. Things are made no easier by a tradition in which maternal love is synonymous with warm, freshly baked bread. An American housewife reaches the epitome of efficiency when she can boast of baking all her family's requirements. Even working women with busy careers are known to set aside one weekend a month to do all their baking. This they freeze and heat in small portions at mealtimes.

This was fine when feminine beauty did not depend on the girth of a waistline, and women could gain weight with confidence. In those days baking did not affect people psychologically. Once one realizes how hard it is to resist the smell of freshly baked cakes and pastries, one will understand the enormous guilt trip suffered by many women on the Monday following a baking spree.

Together with bread one needs sausage and cheese to make up a solid down-to-earth meal. The German influence on American food can be seen in these sausages. There are about two hundred different varieties of sausages available in America. In the heavily German populated city of Milwaukee there are at least fifty separate sausage manufacturing concerns. Sausages can range anywhere between the bland "hot dog" variety to hot ones that make your tongue tingle. The diameters of these serpentine objects can stretch from half an inch to a foot.

Cheese too is generally thought to be German, because the names sound so German. In reality America is the largest cheese producer in the world, with France a poor second. Statisticians tell us that the average American eats seven pounds of cheese a year. Nine pounds, if we include the cheese spreads used in sandwiches and **hors d'oeuvres.**

Nutrition experts are now trying to convert Americans into breakfast eaters. They maintain that one-third of the food intake per day should be eaten in the morning. Now that is hard to practise. In most households mothers have a breakneck time in the morning trying to get the family to wherever each member is supposed to be, before leaving for work themselves. If at this time one expects them to fry eggs, slice grape-fruit, and grill bacon, it is asking for the impossible.

Cereal manufacturers are cashing in on this predicament, and in every supermarket there is an entire aisle devoted to breakfast cereals. They come in every shape and colour, with all imaginable flavourings and tastes. Most children's programmes on TV have been taken over by cereal ads, which pop and crackle the most stubborn non-eater into salivating. But the Food and Drug Administration is very unhappy. The sugar content in most of these cereals is too high to be acceptable. The sugar, unfortunately, has to be added to tempt the child to the table.

Next to cereals it is soups that food manufacturers are trying the hardest to push through the media. Here too they are up against opposition from nutrition centres which are telling wives and mothers how easy it is to make more nourishing soups right from scratch, starting with fresh meat and vegetables. You don't even have to be at home while it is cooking.

For the past two Christmases the most popular gift to men and women alike has been the crock-pot, or slow cooker. One switches it on, with the built-in timer, and leaves for the day. When he or she returns, dinner is

Continued on page 49

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FASHION OFF THE PAVEMENTS

Aruna Mallya

You wouldn't associate a name like Ramdayal with high fashion, would you? Sounds more like the paanwalla down the street corner. Yet Ramdayal is very much associated with the "in" outfits of today. He is one of those export garments' sellers whose shacks have mushroomed on the periphery of Cross Maidan in Bombay. Day in and day out you find him there amidst a wide range of kurtas, halters, caftans and baggy tops.

Ramdayal hails from Lucknow. On the wrong side of twenty, he has "graduated" to his present position after experimenting with several odd jobs as a hotel boy and a newspaper vendor. "Din ki roti chal jati hai," (I earn enough for a square meal every day) he says, reluctant to give an exact estimate of his earnings. He gets his stock, mostly rejects, from export houses in Chembur and Jogeshwari.

How do these trendy garments find their way to the pavements? Very often it may happen that the manufacturers receive bulk orders from abroad for a particular pattern. When the order reaches the wholesalers, they may not find it up to the mark, so the entire order is cancelled. The manufacturers then hastily flood the home markets with the stock and are willing to dispose it off at throw-away prices. The recent boom in the export industry has given thousands of people a source of livelihood and it is thus that these pavement sellers have come to be.

Munna is another member of the tribe. He is the proud owner of one of the largest stalls in Churchgate. This young face certainly does not betray the shrewdness of his business tactics which surface the minute you start haggling over prices. The expertise with which he explains the intricacy of the embroidery, the finesse of the fabric and the style, would have you thoroughly brain washed and perhaps tricked into completing your entire summer shopping there. Munna gets his "maal" from Andheri and Parel. His garments too are rejects. One can't help noticing signs of newly acquired prosperity around — the gaudy transistor, the flashy wrist watch and presumably a "phoren" lighter. He says he earns about Rs. 500 per month.

Haggard old Sushila presents a rather pathetic picture. "What earnings madam?" she asks ruefully. "We barely earn Rs. 6 per day." If given a chance, she would prefer any other work. "We have to do something for our stomachs, don't we," she philosophises in her Bombay Hindi, "otherwise they brand us as thieves and beggars."

It was at Sushila's stall that I met Shirley. Every inch the mod teenager of today, Shirley loves to browse around these stalls. "It is the jean culture that set the craze for these cotton and crepe tops. On the campus they are the rage and so are the cotton midis," she says. "Besides for Bombay's heat they are real cool and comfy", she adds in typical college lingo.

The most important factor determining the popularity of these clothes is of course the rock-bottom prices. An ordinary cotton top costs nothing less than Rs. 25 if you go through the whole gamut of buying the material and getting it stitched and with the tailoring charges zooming up, it is little wonder that youngsters go in for these export varieties.

The scene now shifts to Colaba. The pavement opposite Regal Cinema is flooded with heaps of clothes and teenagers can be seen rummaging through the piles in the hope of digging out some hep outfits. Dinesh has his pavement posting outside Sahakari Bhandar. He earns Rs. 400 per month. It is a fixed salary irrespective of his daily sales. A high school drop-out, he operates without a licence and hence has to keep a constant vigil for the merciless raids of the Municipal trucks.

A little further down is a stall owned by an Agakhani lad (he refused to disclose his name). Quite an enterprising youth, he takes home about Rs. 600 per month. Educated upto Matric, he first worked in a Muslim welfare organisation. But the pay was so meagre that he had to quit. He then started a small shoe shop at Colaba which was also a failure and so finally he settled for the clothes line.

He seems quite content with his present job. "Except during the monsoons, business is quite good this side," he beams. The stall being in a fashionable locality, he takes great care in the display of his garments.

What about the prices?

"The very fact that we are pavement sellers means that our prices should be low. Customers come here with the sole intention of bargaining and we give them plenty of room for that," he chuckles mischievously. "We rattle off prices according to appearances and demand more from foreigners, and why not?" he claims on seeing my disdain. "Some of them take bulk orders from us and sell them in their countries for four times the price they pay us."

According to our Agakhani friend these pavement sellers have formed a union. At the moment one of their grievances is that very shortly they will be shifted from their present places to one specific lane.

"All of us crowding into one lane won't be fun," he grimaces. "Being on the main road is better for our business."

What about competition?

"Of course there is competition amongst us, though not with the big shops — they have their set of clientele, we have ours." Students and tourists are his main customers.

Under the hot afternoon sun and under the kaleidoscopic neon lights, amidst the roar of traffic, heavy deals are struck and money changes hands, and the customers go back exhausted after a hectic bargaining session. And the pavement sellers retire peacefully, satisfied at having earned their "din ki roti".

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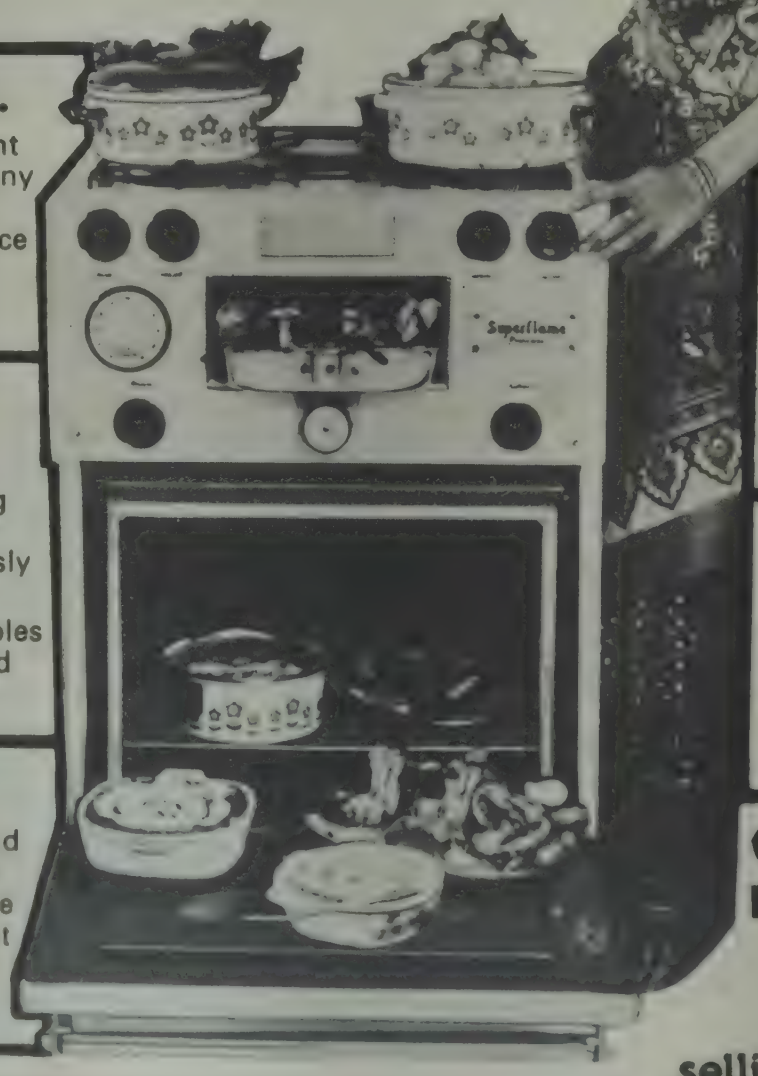

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INGREDIENT—The Right Way

CAULIFLOWER

Cauliflower, the queen of the cabbage family, is the most popular among the vegetables. It has a high vitamin content. It has a delicate flavour and should be cooked carefully to retain its natural flavour and nutrients. It loses all its precious minerals and vitamins if over-cooked. There are a number of ways in which cauliflower can be used to produce a main dish. It can be eaten raw too if young and tender and is delicious in soups and salads.

Premila Lal

CAULIFLOWER AU GRATIN

500 grams cauliflower
1 cup cheese, grated
4 tbsps. butter
2 eggs
2 tomatoes, sliced
2 cups milk
2 tbsps. flour
½ tsp. ground black pepper
½ tsp. red chilli powder (optional)
Salt to taste

Boil the cauliflower in water, with a little salt till barely tender. Fry the flour in melted butter for a minute, add milk, gradually stirring. Remove from the fire when the mixture thickens. Add half of the grated cheese, pepper, chilli powder, eggs, salt and mix well. Spread half of the mixture in a buttered dish and arrange cauliflower and tomato over it. Cover with the remaining mixture and sprinkle remaining grated cheese on top. Dot with butter and bake in a moderate oven till top turns a rich golden brown.

Photograph : Taiyeb Badshah

DUM GOBI

1 medium size cauliflower
2 onions
½ tsp. sugar
2 tbsps. ghee or oil
1 cup thick curd
2 tomatoes, chopped
Salt to taste
Coriander leaves, chopped
GRIND TO A PASTE:
2 cloves garlic, flaked
2½ inch piece ginger
4 red chillis
2 cloves
2 cardamoms
1 stick cinnamon
¼ tsp. peppercorns
½ tsp. turmeric

Put the trimmed, washed cauliflower on the trivet in the cooker with quarter cup of water. Bring to pressure and cook for five minutes. Reduce heat instantly under a tap. Heat fat in a pan and fry the ground paste till fat floats on to the top. Add sugar, salt and some of the curd while frying. Put in the remaining curd and tomatoes and fry. Remove trivet from the cooker and place back the cauliflower. Spoon the masala as much as possible between the flowerets and pour over the rest. Steam without the vent weight for about fifteen to twenty minutes. Serve sprinkled with a little garam masala and chopped coriander.

CAULIFLOWER PULLAO

1 small cauliflower
1 cup rice
2 onions, chopped
2 tbsps. ghee
½ lemon
Salt to taste
GRIND TO A PASTE:
¼ coconut, grated
12 green chillis
1 pod garlic, flaked
4 cloves
4 cardamoms
½ inch piece cinnamon

Break up, wash and boil the cauliflower. Strain and keep aside. Half boil the rice. Drain and keep aside. Fry the onions in ghee till a light brown. Add the masala paste and cook till the ghee glazes the masala and separates. Add cauliflower and mix. Add the rice and salt. Mix well. Add about half cup of water, and cook for about fifteen minutes. Remove from the fire, squeeze the half lemon over it and serve.

SHAHI GOBI MATAR KHEEMA

1 kg cauliflower
250 grams peas, shelled
4 onions, finely chopped
1 inch piece ginger
2 cloves garlic, flaked
½ tsp. cummin seeds
1 tsp. garam masala
4-6 green chillis
½ tsp. mango powder
250 grams tomatoes
½ cup curd
1 tbsp. khoya
1 tbsp. raisins
Salt to taste
4 tbsps. ghee
Coriander leaves, chopped

Boil the peas till tender, drain and keep aside. Grate the cauliflower coarsely. Heat two tablespoons ghee and fry the cauliflower till brown.

In a large pan, heat the remaining ghee and fry the onions, ground garlic and ginger, and two minced green chillis. Add salt, cummin seeds, garam masala and mango powder. Put in the chopped tomatoes. Add the cauliflower, raisins and khoya. Add two cups water and cook till the ghee floats to the top. Add peas and cook for ten more minutes. Sprinkle with chopped green chillis and coriander leaves.

CAULIFLOWER AND CHICKEN STEW

1 large chicken
1 kg cauliflower, cut into flowerets
½ cup milk
1 coconut
9 green chillis
2 inch piece ginger, chopped
3 onions, sliced
3 cloves
2 inch piece cinnamon
2 tsps. flour
1 tsp. ghee
Salt to taste

Extract coconut milk from the coconut and keep half a cup aside. Joint the chicken and cook for ten minutes in half cup of water with the ginger, chillis, cloves, cinnamon, half the chopped onions, salt and coconut milk. Simmer. When the chicken is nearly tender add cauliflower and cook for the remaining time. Heat the ghee in a separate saucepan and stir in the flour and brown it. Then add the half cup of coconut milk. When thick, stir this into the chicken. Bring to the boil and serve.

CHICKEN WITH CAULIFLOWER

1 large chicken
400 grams cauliflower
2 medium size onions
2 inch turmeric, ground
1 inch piece ginger
6 cloves garlic, flaked
1 cup thick coconut milk
2 blades lemon grass
6 cloves, ground
5 cardamoms, crushed
4 inch piece cinnamon, ground
1½ tbsps. ghee
Salt and chilli powder to taste

Cut the cauliflower into medium pieces. Steep in water for fifteen minutes. Grind together the onions, garlic and ginger. Heat ghee and fry the ground ingredients together with turmeric, cloves, cardamom and cinnamon. Then add the chicken pieces, season with salt and chilli and fry. Stir in the cauliflower when the chicken is brown. Pour in the coconut milk and put in the lemon grass. Cover and simmer until the chicken is tender. Before serving remove the lemon grass.

CURRIED PRAWN SALAD AND CAULIFLOWER

450 grams prawns, shelled
1 small cauliflower
A cupful mayonnaise
1 tsp. garam masala
1 green chilli
A small bunch coriander leaves
A bunch spring onions
1 lettuce head

Cook the prawns in enough water and salt till done. Dice the cauliflower into small pieces and steam or boil till tender but still crisp. Drain and mix with the prawns in a bowl. Mince or chop the green chilli and spring onions finely. Blend into the mayonnaise together with a teaspoon of garam masala. Pour over the prawns and cauliflower and mix. Prepare a bed of crisp lettuce and pile the prawn salad in the centre. Chill and serve.

GOBI KOOTU

½ cup yellow gram dal
2 cups cauliflower, chopped
1½ cups coconut gratings
4 red chillis
1 tsp. turmeric
1 tsp. peppercorns
1 tsp. mustard
A small piece jaggery
A few curry leaves
Salt to taste

Cook the dal and cauliflower together. Grind the pepper and add it to the cooked vegetable. Add the turmeric and salt. Grind about one cup of coconut gratings into a fine paste and add to the cooked dal and vegetable. When it begins to boil, remove from the fire. Add the jaggery. Fry the mustard, chillis, curry leaves and the remaining coconut gratings. When the grating turn red, remove from the tava and add to the prepared kootu. Mix well and serve.

ANNOUNCING NEW GIFTS FOR OUR COOKERY WINNERS

Prize winners of our Weekly Contest will receive in addition to the usual Rs. 50.00 cash prize:

1) A 9 cup Storefresh container from TRUPTI INDUSTRIES, 2) A gift Hamper from WEIKFIELD containing Elaichi Custard Powder, Jelly Crystals, Drinking Chocolate, Glucose-D, Variety Custard Powder and Corn Flour and, 3) a 4-plate Meera Steam-Thru from MEERA METAL INDUSTRIES, Bombay.

Miss Mukul Basu, New Delhi

PRAWN ROLLS

500 grams prawns
10 grams ginger, ground
4 onions, ground
4 green chillis, ground
2 tbsps. groundnut oil
1 tbsp. vinegar
1 tsp. salt
300 grams flour
1½ tbsps. ghee
Red chilli powder to taste
Salt to taste

Chop the prawns into small pieces. Mix the prawn with the paste and add the groundnut oil, vinegar and salt. Mix and leave aside for one hour.

Sieve the flour with chilli powder and salt to taste. Add ghee. Knead. Roll the dough into a thin sheet. Add two tablespoons of the prawn mixture. Lightly roll in and press each end of the roll firmly. Deep fry till golden brown.

Mrs. Nirmala Sircar, Bombay.

MUTTON PULLAO

½ kg rice
½ kg mutton
100 grams cashewnuts
2 large onions
3 tbsps. ghee

GRIND TO A PASTE :

8 cloves
10 peppercorns
3 cardamoms
1 tsp. shahjeera
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
4 green chillis

TO BE TIED IN A CLOTH :

6 cloves garlic, flaked
1 inch piece ginger
1 stick cinnamon
6 cloves
10 peppercorns
3 cardamoms
½ tsp. coriander powder
½ bunch fresh coriander
1 tsp. poppy seeds
2 bay leaves
2 green chillis

Clean and wash the mutton. Put in the cooker. Pour sufficient quantity of water and put in the tied masala bag. Add salt to taste and steam for ten minutes. Keep aside. Remove the mutton from the cooker after extracting the juice from the masala bag. Heat ghee. Fry the cinnamon, cloves, peppercorns, shahjeera. Add onions, cashewnuts and fry till light brown. Add the ginger and garlic paste and fry for half a minute. Add the washed rice, mutton and salt to taste. Pour in the leftover mutton stock with the required quantity of water. Steam cook till done.

Dissolve saffron and sprinkle on the pullao. Put a spoonful of pure ghee on top. Mix slowly. Garnish with onion and lemon rings.

SHUVRA CHOWDHURY, New Delhi.

Miss Chowdhury wins Rs. 50 for this week's best recipe plus a 9 cup Storefresh container from Trupti Industries, a gift hamper from Weikfield and a 4-plate Meera Steamthru from Meera Metal Industries, Bombay.

STUFFED GOURD

2 kg gourd, round shaped
250 grams minced meat
2 onions
1 cup rice
1 clove garlic, ground
4 cubes cheese, grated
1 tomato, chopped
1 tsp. sugar
Salt to taste
2 tsps. chilli powder
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tbsp. vinegar
1 cup vanaspati
1½ cups boiling water
½ cup raisins, cashewnuts

GRIND TO A PASTE :

6 cardamoms
6 cloves
2 2-inch pieces cinnamon

FOR THE GRAVY :

4 potatoes boiled, mashed
1 onion, chopped
Puree of 4 tomatoes
½ tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. sugar
1 cup cauliflower and peas, diced
Salt to taste

Skin the gourd thinly. Cut the top off. Scoop pulp till one centimetre thick shell is left. Rub salt inside the gourd and keep aside.

Fry half of the garlic paste till light brown. Add the chopped onion. When it turns brown, add the tomatoes, chilli powder, salt turmeric, sugar and fry for two minutes. Add the minced meat and vinegar. Finally, add half of the ground paste and fry for five minutes, till brown. Remove and keep aside.

Soak the rice for five minutes. Drain and dry. Fry with the left-over ground paste, raisin, and cashewnut, till crisp. Add hot water and remove the rice from the fire immediately. Add to this the minced meat and fill in the gourd shell. Close the lid and bind with a little wheat-flour dough. Keep aside.

For the Gravy: Fry the onion till brown. Add salt, sugar and chilli powder. Fry for one minute and add the mashed potato, peas, cauliflower and pulp, and cook till semi thick. Pour this gravy in the pressure cooker and place the stuffed gourd in the centre. Steam for fifteen to twenty minutes. Cool and remove the stuffed gourd into a serving dish carefully. Pour the gravy around the gourd. Sprinkle grated cheese. Serve immediately.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Monthly Cookery Queen Contest

All cookery contestants for the Monthly Cookery Contest have to send in their recipes, non-vegetarian or vegetarian according to the subjects specified for each month. Out of seven best selected entries, one Monthly Queen and one Weekly Winner will be selected. The remaining five recipes will be published along with the winning recipes. We give below subjects for the coming three months to enable you to send in your entries well in advance.

March, 1981
SPINACH SPECIALITIES

April, 1981
VEGETABLE PUDDINGS

May, 1981
PICKLES

All entries for March should reach us latest by February 5, April entries by March 5 and May entries by April 5, 1981

COOKERY CONTEST RULES

1. Each recipe must be accompanied by this coupon.
2. The author of each selected entry will be informed in advance and requested to send a passport size photograph of herself to be published along with her recipe.
3. The recipe must be original and not copied from a cookery book, a magazine or any other published material. The prize-winner shall have to sign a declaration to that effect before the announcement is made and the prize awarded.

Address your entries to the Cookery Editor, Eve's Weekly, Bombay Samachar Marg Bombay-400 023.

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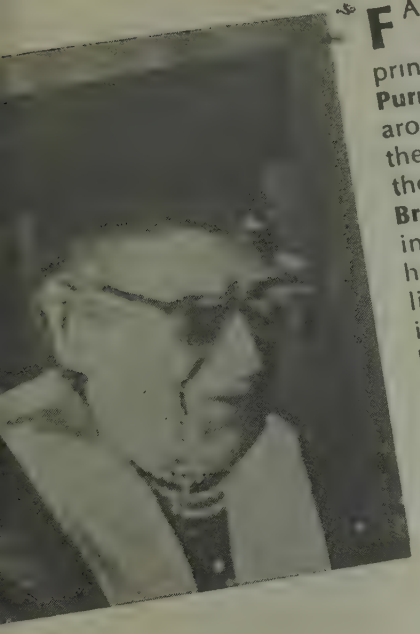
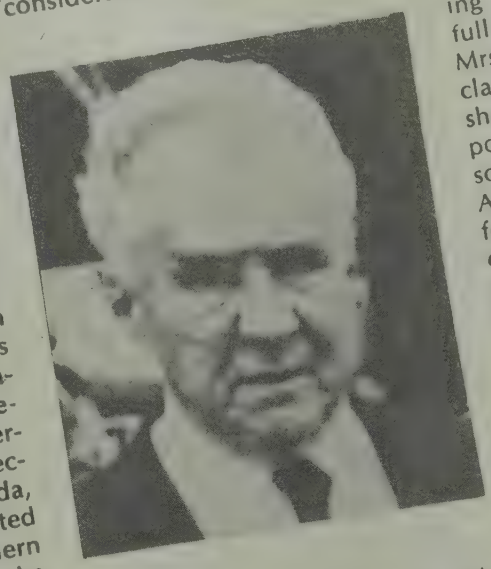


FAIRY tale weddings still take place. The glamorous princess of Morvi (in Gujarat), **Purna,** who at 26 has jet-setted around the world with her mother and sister Maya, married the Guinness heir **Garech Browne** (41) recently. Getting into the spirit of the thing, we hear that Browne, who had earlier decided on a civil wedding, instead opted for a full scale Hindu wedding and has changed his name to Girish. And what of princess Purna's background? British columnist William Hickey writes: "Purna belongs to an obscure sect called the Rajneesh, known around Bombay as the Orange People."

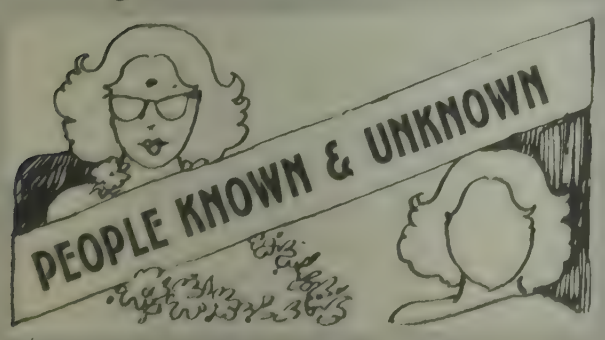
REMEMBER the lady who said, "It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness"? **Welthy Honsinger Fisher,** the grand old lady of adult literacy in India, who took Gandhiji's advice seriously when he told her to discover the real India in the villages, died recently at the age of 101 in the United States. Welthy Fisher, who founded Literacy House in Lucknow, loved India so much that she left her native U.S. to settle down here and promote adult literacy on a mass scale. It is impossible to list the number of awards she got in recognition of her pioneering work — two of them being the Ramon Magsaysay and the Nehru Literacy awards — but she used the money to promote more houses of education. She also trained teachers in the special job of teaching adults. Her other love was farming, and she set up an institute to teach young farmers. In teaching in the rural areas, she shifted the emphasis from the three Rs to the three Fs — functional literacy, food and family. As an admirer commented, the institute that Welthy Fisher founded has become an institution today.

INDIANS abroad must be heaving a sigh of relief. History has come full circle in Uganda. **Milton Obote,** who was overthrown by his military commander **Idi Amin,** has been returned to power by an overwhelming majority after an election. As President of Uganda, the socialist Obote had created strong resentment in southern Uganda when he abolished the country's old kingdoms, promulgated a republican constitution and proceeded to implement socialistic reforms in the country. After his ouster in 1962, he spent his time in exile in neighbouring Tanzania, plotting his return to power. He has promised to bring stability to the country, but Indian businessmen who fled the country after Dada Idi Amin took over are waiting to see if Obote manages to stay in power. After all, Amin is still lurking in Libya, planning a glorious return!

ANOTHER friend of India who passed away recently was former Soviet Prime Minister **Alexie Kosygin** (76) who died in the resuscitation ward of a Moscow hospital. After 16 years as Prime Minister, he bowed out of his job just two months ago on grounds of ill health. There was speculation that he might have been eased out because of his economic policies that have put the Soviet Union in the red. This was further given credence by the fact that no tributes were paid to him on the day he resigned. But two days later, the President, Mr. Leonid Brezhnev put all rumours to rest when he publicly thanked Kosygin for his "considerable and fruitful work over many years." In death, Mr. Kosygin has been given a splendid state funeral and the urn containing his ashes is expected to be buried alongside those of other prominent Soviet leaders.



TALKING of President **Leonid Brezhnev,** what was he doing in India recently? He is said to be ailing and hasn't received many prominent world leaders when they visited Moscow in the past year. And recently, there was a controversy that he had snubbed **President Sanjiva Reddy** in Moscow when he didn't turn up at the official banquet in his honour. Then what was he doing here? As usual, Delhi was full of rumours. One was that Mrs. Gandhi was planning to declare an Emergency again and she needed Soviet moral support to do it. Another "credible" source said that having occupied Afghanistan and poised to interfere in Poland, the Soviets needed India's support in the international arena. A third source said that with hawk Ronald Reagan on the saddle in America, the world would once again be divided into blocs, and India and Russia were preparing for that eventuality. Yet another source insisted that actually, with General Zia of Pakistan all ready to declare war on India, the Soviets had come here to assure their support. But the true answers are known only to Brezhnev and Mrs. Gandhi, who like the proverbial Sphinx and the Oriental remain silent and inscrutable.



AT last there has been a conviction after so many years. When Daulat Mansingh, a Customs preventive officer in Bombay, decided to get married, he demanded in person and through a letter Rs. 30,000 and the transfer of certain landed properties as dowry from his prospective father-in-law, Mr. Bansi. He instead took Daulat to court, proved his case and won a conviction. But of course, in this country the joke was on the bride.

The "conviction" amounted to Daulat being jailed for a day and paying a fine of Rs. 1,000. Why won't people continue demanding dowry when even after conviction they are almost let off scot free!

Lakshmi Narayan

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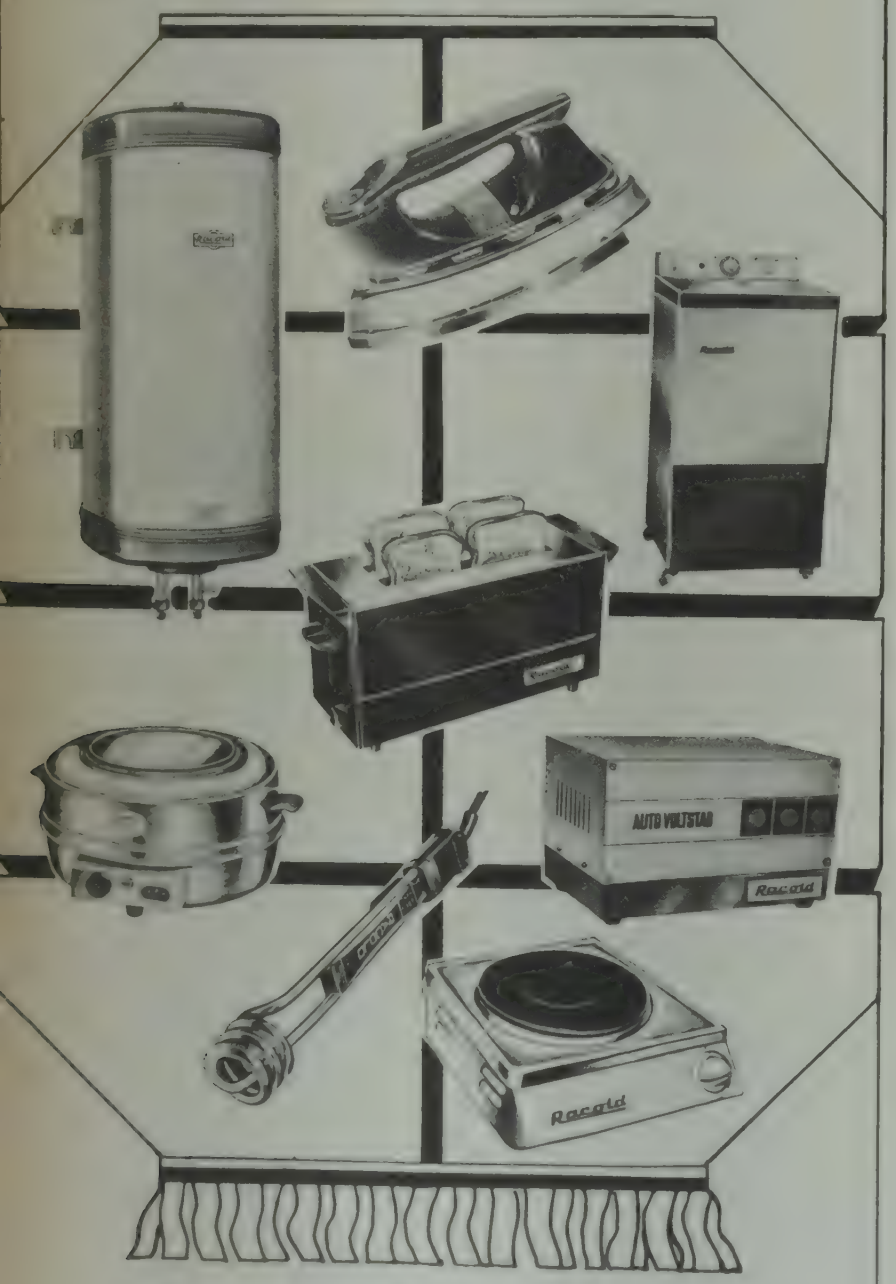

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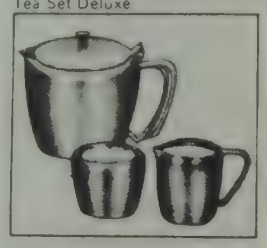

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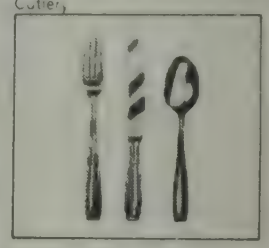

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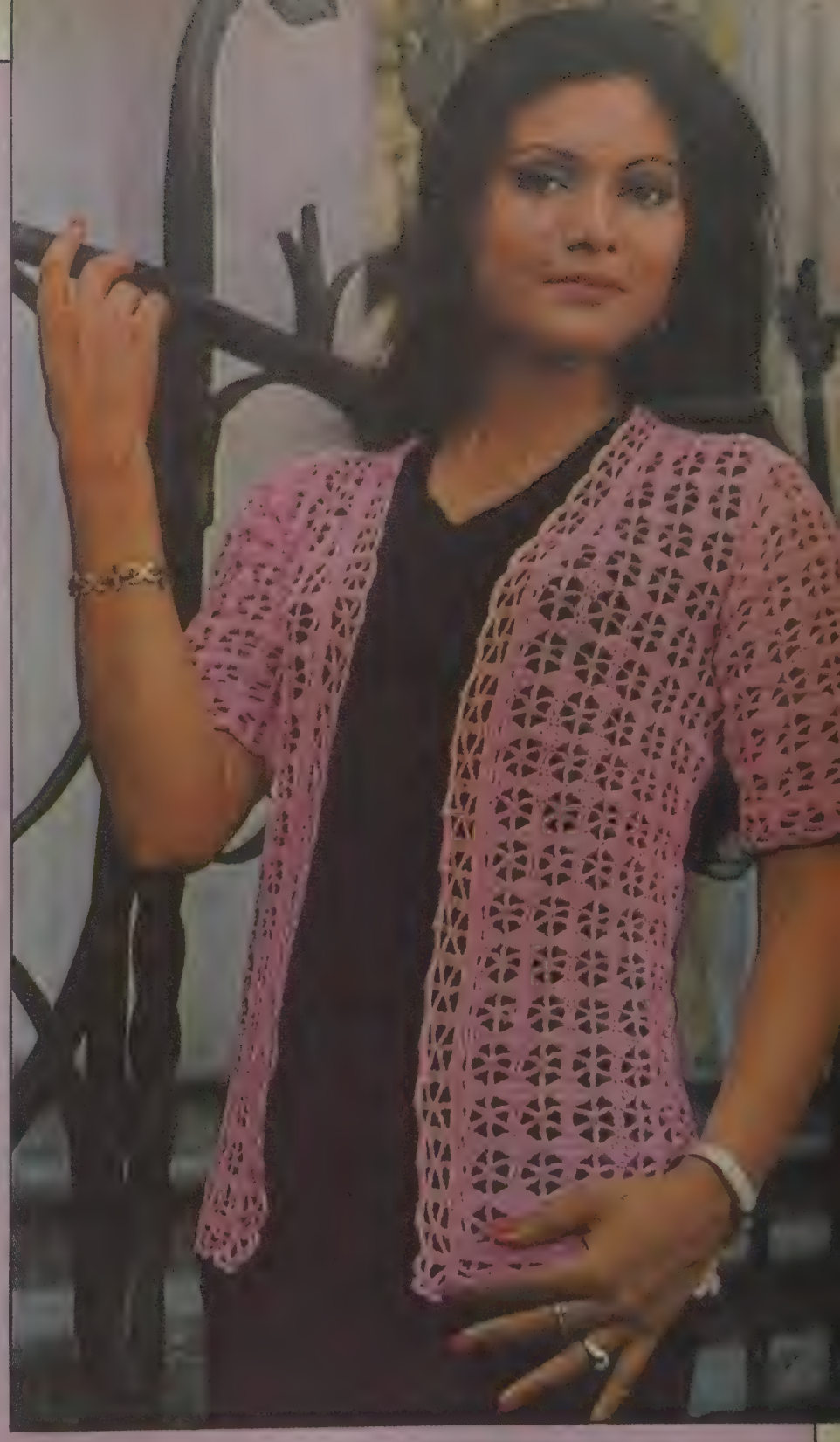


MATERIALS:

Knitting Cotton — 6 balls Pink (50 grams each). Crochet hook no. 14.

MEASUREMENTS:

Bust 81.5 cms., length 60 cms., sleeve seam 16 cms.

ABBREVIATIONS:

ch. = chain; tr. = treble; h.tr. = half treble; dc. = double crochet; dbl. tr. = double treble; trip. tr. = triple treble; rep. = repeat; inc. = increase; dec. = decrease; alt. = alternate; beg. = beginning; ch. sp. = chain space; s.s. = slip stitch; sts. = stitches.

JACKET

Back and Front worked in one piece.

Work a row of 219 ch., turn.

Foundation row: 1 dc. in 2nd ch. from hook, 1 dc. in each ch. to end, (218 dc.) 1 ch., turn.

1st row: 1 dc. in each of next 2 dc., * 3 ch., miss 3 dc., 1 tr. in next dc., 3 ch., miss 3 dc., 1 dc. in each of next 2 dc., rep. from * to end, 3 ch., turn.

2nd row: 1 dbl.tr. in 2nd dc., * 3 ch., 1 dc. in next tr., 3 ch., 1 dbl.tr. in each of next 2 dc. rep. from * to end, 1 ch., turn.

3rd row: 1 dc. in next dbl tr., * 3 ch., 1 dbl.tr. in next dc., 3 ch., 1 dc. in each of next 2 dbl. tr. rep. from * to end, 5 ch. turn.

4th row: 1 trip.tr. in next dc. * (1 dbl.tr., 1 tr., 1 dc) in next 3 ch.sp., 1 dc. in next dbl.tr., (1 dc., 1 tr., 1 dbl.tr.) in next 3 ch. sp. 1 trip.tr. in each of next 2 dc., rep. from * to end, 1 ch. turn.

5th row: 1 dc. in next trip.tr., * 3 ch., miss (dbl.tr., tr. and dc.), 1 dbl.tr. in next dc. (centre dc.), 3 ch., 1 dc. in each of next 2 trip. tr. rep. from * to end, 3 ch., turn.

6th row: As 2nd row.

3rd to 6th rows form the pattern; rep. pattern 11 times more, then work 3rd and 4th rows once, 1 ch., turn.

Shape armholes and neck:

Next row: (With wrong side of work facing) 1 dc. in next trip. tr. (3 ch., 1 dbl.tr. in centre dc., 3 ch., 1 dc. in each of next 2 trip.tr.) 5 times, turn (6 sts. dec. from side seam position).

Now dec. 3 sts. at armhole in next row, 2 sts. in following row and 1 st. in each of next 2 rows, at the same time dec. 1 st. at neck edge in every row (from 1st row of armhole shaping) till 13 sts. have been dec. 23 sts. should remain, then continue straight till work measures 55 cms. from start of armhole, fasten off. Shape the other 3 armhole slopes as the first armhole and shape the other side of neck to correspond with first side, reversing shapings.

SLEEVES

Work a row of 84 ch., turn.

Work 1 row of dc. and work pattern as for front and back inc. 1 st. at each end of 5th and every following row till there are 104 sts. (10 sts. inc. on each side), then continue straight till sleeve measures 14 cms.

Shape Top: Dec. 5 sts. at each end of next row, 3 sts. at each end of next 5 rows, 2 sts. at each end of next row, 4 sts. at each end of next 6 rows, fasten off.

Join side and shoulder seams.

Work 2 rows of dc. along the bottom edge, front edges and round back of neck.

EDGING AT BASE:

1st round: 1 dc. in next dc., * 3 ch., miss 2 dc., 1 tr. in next dc., 3 ch., miss 3 dc., 1 dc. in each of next 2 dc., rep. from * all round, end with 1 dc. just before the first dc.

2nd round: 3 ch. (for 1 dbl. tr.), 1 dbl.tr. in next dc., * 3 ch., 1 dc. in next tr., 3 ch., 1 dbl.tr. in each of next 2 dc., rep. from * end with 3 ch., 1 dc. in last tr., 3 ch., s.s. to top of first 3 ch.

3rd round: 1 dc. in same place as s.s., 1 dc. in next dbl. tr., * 3 ch., 1 dbl.tr. in next dc., 3 ch., 1 dc. in each of next 2 dbl.tr., rep. from * all round, s.s. to first dc.

4th round: 1 dc. in next dc., * 3 dc. in next 3 ch. sp., 2 ch.tr. in next dbl.tr., 3 dc. in next sp., 1 dc. in each of next 2 dc., rep. from * s.s. to first dc., fasten off.

Neck and armhole edging: Similarly work to match edging at base working 3 rows of dc. and 4 rows of edging round neck edge and around each of the armholes.

Work 1 row of dc. along each sleeve edge and then work 4 rows of edging.

Join sleeve seams and set sleeves into armholes.

Arnavaz Dhondy

DIARY OF A REBELLIOUS

"WHY SHOULD I SPEND MY MONEY UNNECESSARILY TO MAKE MULTINATIONALS RICHER?" ASKED THE DEFIANT MOTHER. AS A HEALTH RESEARCH WORKER SHE DARED TO QUESTION ACCEPTED PRACTICES LIKE BLINDLY DOSING THE PREGNANT MOTHER-TO-BE WITH LARGE AMOUNTS OF EXPENSIVE

Srilatha Batliwala

FEBRUARY, 1978:

Despite the fever and the queaziness, which the doctor would undoubtedly diagnose as flu, I know what had happened. I felt that secret lurch, the bursting of fertility that many dismiss as nonsense — except those who have felt it. Last time, when I conceived my son, Riyad, I was ignorant for weeks, not understanding that vague sense of sickness with no real cause. And that time, they told me it was an ulcer! Well, another little ulcer is on its way.

A WEEK LATER :

Even as I close the little bottle of urine — and grimace at the indignity of it all — I hope for a girl. Thirty rupees later, they tell me it's positive: Congratulations! I smile smugly on the winding road up to Coonoor for our annual holiday. Zarir and I exchange contented glaces, knowing there was more than one journey ahead of us.

MARCH, 1978.

Just got back from the first visit to the doctor, full of **deja vu.** The baby is due in October. Zarir threatens dire consequences if I don't hang on long enough to make the baby a Scorpio!

Everything's fine, the doctor says. Of course it is! All the fuss, excitement and worry, the caution and barrage of advice from all and sundry which plague the first pregnancy are gone. This time, I know my body and myself much better. I am going to do things very differently this time round. Last time I religiously followed medical advice which landed me in a premature delivery lasting three days, with danger to the baby and myself. I swallowed tablets and diet supplements and did my bit for the profits of the multinationals. But now I've worked for three years in a health research group and have understood the fallibility of doctor and drug alike. I'm going to question and learn, armed with information.

APRIL, 1978:

Still feeling fine; no nausea or lethargy — there's much to be said for a second pregnancy. Riyad is very interested in his invisible sibling. I showed him my book: where the baby is, how it will grow, what it looks like.

The office has just assigned me a research paper on nutrition problems in India. A good opportunity to do some checking on the myths and facts of pre-natal diets. I'll study what a pregnant woman really needs, and how to get it from food, not bottles.

MAY, 1978:

My last entry was prophetic! The doctor wants me to take additional protein — one of those foul-tasting milk-additives or biscuits. Why? I ask. It's good for the baby, she says; it develops the brain. Knowing very well I was mothering a genius, I argue. Did she have any reason to believe I was deficient in protein? No, she said, but it's better to be on the safe side. Wasn't it true that there was such a thing as overdose of protein, in which proteins are burnt as energy, with no real benefit? Only in very large amounts, she said, and smiled. But if you're not convinced, think it over.

I told her about the nutrition paper I was researching. We decided I would look into the facts and call her back. That's why I liked her; she treated you as if you were intelligent and had a right to participate in your own treatment.

First of all I looked up my current Bible — a simple book called "The Nutritive Value of Indian Foods" published by the National Institute of Nutrition (Indian Council of Medical Research). This is a basic and authoritative volume which spells out the minimum daily requirements of all the nutrients for each age group and gender.

The daily protein requirement of a pregnant woman is 55 gms — only 10 grams more than that of a sedentary woman at other times. In other publications of the same Institute, I found data from all over the country which showed that even people from low-income families get sufficient protein in their daily diets. What they lack, in fact, are enough calories to allow the protein to be used for maintenance and body-building, instead of being burned up for energy. The women in such families may get less protein than they need only because they eat last and least. This is hardly the situation in well-to-do families.

I then dashed off to meet my nutritionist friend at the J. J. Hospital — a very down-to-earth girl who was on her own crusade against nutrition through pills and tablets instead of food. She and I worked out that I needed only a marginal increase in the diet I was already eating to get my daily protein requirement. Translated into actual food intake, this means about 300 grams of wheat, rice and other cereals, 100 grams of dal (preferably a variety of them), 1 litre of milk, good portions of vegetables (at least two varieties, one being the green leafy type) and a handful of peanuts or chana, everyday.

This is for a vegetarian. If one is non-vegetarian, there is even less to worry about; you simply add an egg a day, and meat, fish or poultry several times a week. This kind of diet ensures the expectant mother of her daily protein.

My next stop was at the chemist's. At the dosage prescribed by the doctor, I would have to buy Rs. 60 worth of protein supplement per month!

Clearly, there is no reason why a woman like myself, who can afford to eat an adequate quantity of food, should be deficient in protein. Besides, instead of spending Rs. 60 (which I can ill-afford) on enriching some pharmaceutical company, I would use it to buy protein-rich foods which the whole family can share.

JUNE, 1978 :

Back to my doctor's office. She listens to my excited arguments against extra protein. I spread my charts and nutrition tables, pealing out the names of Government agencies and prestigious research institutions to back my findings. OK, she says, I'm convinced. Forget the protein. It's a momentary triumph, but I'm still worried. This was a highly capable woman, skilled and experienced, but I knew from my research that there were yawning gaps in the medical curriculum regarding nutrition. This meant that even the most sincere and experienced obstetricians, with these gaps in their training, were open to the double-talk of sales reps peddling products of dubious value. There were obviously conditions which necessitated supplementary protein, but a well-fed woman's pregnancy was not one of them.

I feel every responsible obstetrician should take the trouble to find out what sort of diet the expectant mother eats **before** pres-

MOTHER-TO-BE

CALCIUM, IRON AND VITAMIN TABLETS. SHE PROBED, INVESTIGATED, AND CAME UP WITH SEVERAL INTERESTING ANSWERS TO HER QUERIES ABOUT THE NECESSITY OF THESE MEDICINES. AND ALL THROUGH, SHE WAS FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO HAVE AN INTELLIGENT, KIND, GYNAECOLOGIST AS HER FRIEND AND GUIDE

cribing expensive supplements. After all, we pay well enough for the privilege of conci-entious care.

JULY, 1978 :

My sixth month passing by. What a difference one's attitude makes! I'm up and about in buses and trains. Last week we listened to the baby's heart on the foetus monitor. Riyad said it sounded like a train going full-steam. The doctor is happy with my progress, but I have to watch my weight. I feel the baby move almost every day.

The doctor broached the topic of iron and calcium supplements, but gingerly, poor dear! This is the time when you need extra calcium, iron and vitamins, she said. But there was a smile on her lips, she knew from the flash in my eyes what was coming. Calcium? Iron? Vitamins? Can I check on all this? Fine, she sighed. Go ahead. She was fond of me, but I wasn't the best patient in history.

A WEEK LATER:

The case for calcium is very similar to protein. A pregnant woman needs 1 gm. of calcium a day. The richest sources of calcium are milk and milk products (dahi, cheese, lassi) and green leafy vegetables. My nutritionist friend tell me that 1 litre of milk (in any form) would give me all the calcium the baby and I need.

But there's a rider: milk and green leafy vegetables may be great natural sources of calcium, but what is the cost-benefit? Leafy bhajis are cheap, but few people like to eat them every day. Milk is more complicated — some people hate milk (and even milk products) or are allergic to it. For them, calcium tablets are obviously necessary. Milk has also become a very expensive commodity. By my reckoning, a litre a day could cost as much as Rs. 100/- per month. A commercial calcium preparation costs only a tenth of that. But on the other hand, milk gives you not only calcium, but lots of other nutrients. Calcium tablets give you little else. I opt for milk, and anyone who can afford it should.

TWO DAYS LATER:

Some interesting footnotes from my research study:

1. "Paan" (betel) leaves, when spread with "chuna" (lime) are a good source of calcium.

2. "The calcium requirements in quantitative terms (of) man are not known with any degree of definiteness...

Iron has struck a blow to my theories, especially since iron deficiency anemia may disastrously affect the course of a pregnancy. An estimated 30 per cent of pregnant women in India have iron deficiency anemia. Let's look at this more clearly:

Expectant mothers need 40 mgs. of iron every day. The only way to get this cheaply and naturally seems to be...you guessed it — green leafy vegetables (I think I'll just call them GLVs) and quite large quantities of the stuff each day, if you are a vegetarian. Unless you're a palak-bhaji fiend, the mind boggles. Non-vegetarians are a little better off, since dried fish, liver and eggs are all rich in iron. But it looks like you have to be very careful of your diet to avoid iron deficiency.

I call my doctor and say I give in on iron, but not calcium. More so since commercial iron supplements are quite cheap — maybe cheaper than trying to get it all naturally.

As for multivitamins, there's no proof I need them. I'm healthy and eat well. A lot of vitamins will only give me very expensive urine, as far as my investigation shows.

AUGUST & SEPTEMBER, 1978:

My doctor is quite interested in all this. I think I have helped her gain new insights into the whole question of pre-natal nutrition.

Anyone would wonder why I am so obsessed with all this diet business. I think at the heart of it is a basic dislike of being milked (no pun intended) and also an increasing distrust of 'wonder' remedies, restoratives, tonics and what have you. A glimpse into the murky practices of the pharmaceutical industry gives you a lifelong suspicion of their motives and ethics. My work has given me much more than a glimpse and I now recoil at the sight of those beautifully packaged panaceas.

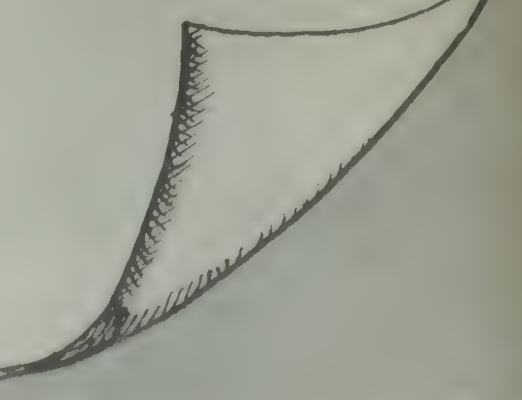
This is foolish in a way, because modern medicine has done much to control the dangers of pregnancy and childbirth which once claimed thousands of lives. Pre-natal care is important and necessary. But the pendulum is now swinging the other way — treating a normal phenomenon like pregnancy as a disease requiring constant medical supervision. A by-product of this process is transforming nature's produce, which cannot be easily packaged and marketed with profit into pills, tablets and tonics which can — thus expanding the medical sphere of control.

The irony of it all — of our economy and the mess we have made of it — is that these synthetic products often prove cheaper than their natural counterparts. No doubt, this symbolises the march of progress as well as the "triumph" of technology, but I am not impressed. A friend of mine keeps lamenting the time wasted in cooking and eating food. Maybe her day of deliverance is not far away; we may soon dispense with breakfast, lunch and dinner at one quick sitting with a couple of tablets and water.

Am I advocating a complete rejection of medical care and advice? No. But I plead for knowledge, for "demystification," for well-informed **participatory** patienthood. I refuse to have blind, unquestioning belief in human gods.

OCTOBER 30TH, 1978 :

Anahita, my beloved dughter, burst into the world this evening — all 7½ pounds of her. See, doctor, see the baby I made? Strong, healthy and alert. No commercial protein calcium or vitamin. Just good food, exercise and lots of love. My charts and calculations and arguments all make sense now; it was she I protected and nurtured, into her I poured my bounty. Doctor smiles: You have a healthy baby daughter, Srilatha. Of course I do!



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THOSE OLD WIVES' TALES

Pregnancy in the old days was considered a major crisis in a woman's life and much superstition surrounded the pregnant woman so that some very curious rules governed her life

Malini Bisen

Superstitions about pregnancy are common in some form or the other among all the people of our country. And they are so deep-rooted in the minds of the people that even while knowing these are irrational, they dare not ignore them.

The pregnant woman is not allowed to see the eclipse. She is supposed to rest in bed without bathing, eating and drinking even water at that time. She is forbidden to make use of the knife because if she cuts anything during the eclipse, she delivers a child with a hare-lip or some other physical deformity. In some communities she is permitted to have the last glimpse of a dead person if he is related to her by blood, but in no community is a pregnant woman allowed to witness the funeral rites. In some castes she can be present for "daspind" rites but she is strictly forbidden to see the crow eating the food offered to the departed soul. Another ban is on a pregnant woman attending a "shraddha". It is believed that if she does she will have an abortion.

There is a general belief the peepal and tamarind trees are haunted by the spirits of the dead whose desires remained unfulfilled when they were alive. Hence a pregnant woman is forbidden to pass under them. It is believed that if she passes under these trees after sunset she will deliver her child prematurely in the eighth month of her pregnancy and the child will be either still-born or die in a day or two.

On Nag Panchmi day Hindu women worship the serpent specially the cobra, and feed it with milk and puffed rice, but the pregnant woman is not allowed to participate in the worship because it is believed that even if her shadow falls on the serpent it becomes blind and enraged, it seeks her out to vent its vengeance on her.

From her seventh month of pregnancy she is not allowed to enter the temples of Lord Shiva.

A pregnant woman is not allowed to visit a woman who has had a delivery, before 40 days have passed, but if it is a relative she may visit after ten days.

In Maharashtra, there is a custom that on special occasions a married woman gives a fresh coconut and a blouse piece or sari to another married woman. This is regarded as very auspicious, but a pregnant woman is not allowed to perform this ceremony.

The pregnant woman is forbidden papaya, ananas and kharvas (a sweet dish prepared by steaming the milk obtained from a cow or buffalo in the second or third day after delivery of a calf). If the woman has a tendency for abortions, she is not allowed jaggery and sweets made with jaggery. She is also not allowed to eat chicken, mutton and eggs. In fact, she is advised to eat simple good food at regular times and avoid liquor and hot drinks.

During pregnancy, it is believed, women have a craving to eat things which normally they would never eat. Every such desire of the pregnant woman should be satisfied, otherwise the child is not born healthy.

The food the pregnant woman eats is believed to have an effect on the complexion of the child. Milk, curds, rice and other white food items cause the child to be fair in colour. The pregnant woman should avoid tight-fitting clothes, especially brassieres, because this will flatten her breasts and damage the nipples which would make breast feeding painful. She must avoid using black and other dark shades for they attract evil spirits.

The behaviour and activities of a would-be-mother are believed to affect the child in her womb. It is believed that if a pregnant woman sleeps too much, specially during the day, it would diminish the intelligence of the child; if she cries, it will affect the eyesight of her child; if she runs too much, the child will be of unstable mind; if she laughs too much the child will not have healthy teeth; if she hears too much of loud talk and argument, the child may be born partially deaf.

She is allowed to see pictures and cultural programmes, but only those that make her happy and elated. She is advised to hang pictures of beautiful, bonny babies in her bedroom, which she should see first thing in the morning. The idea is that the beautiful babies in the pictures will be imprinted on her mind and help the child in her womb to be healthy and beautiful.

The point of all these superstitions is that the pregnant woman was considered as facing a grave crisis in her life and needed protection at every step. And even today, while the terror of pregnancy is gone, the superstitions remain.

REGIONAL RITUALS

The first fruit of a union is a much awaited event all over India. Various rituals are performed during the first pregnancy at different stages to ensure the health of the mother and the welfare of the unborn. The third, fifth, seventh and ninth months of pregnancy are earmarked for functions in most of the communities in India.

TAMILIANS

In South India, in the fifth month an auspicious day is fixed for the popular bangle ceremony known as "valai kappu". This is performed in the morning at the bride's parental home and only womenfolk are invited for this function. Young unmarried girls also participate. The mother-to-be is given the traditional oil bath and is presented with a black silk sari and silver and gold and glass bangles of all hues. The colour black is a must for the saree which is perhaps to ward off the evil eye. She is made to sit on a plank with rangoli designs. Elderly married women ("sumangalis" whose husbands are alive) perform aarti and sing traditional songs heralding the advent of the baby as well as invoking divine help in protecting the mother. The young girls are each presented with glass bangles of their choice. Then they are treated to a typical feast of different preparations of rice.

During the seventh month, the most important ceremony called "srimantham" is celebrated. The husband also participates in the function. During the auspicious hour chosen according to the Hindu calendar, the parents-to-be are seated flanked by a couple of priests in front of the holy fire. The bride is presented with a nine-yard saree by her in-laws and she has to wear it in the traditional style. Mantras are recited stressing the desire that a male child should be born. The significance here is that there should be no sexual intercourse between the couple thereafter till the birth of the baby. The bride goes to her parents' house after this ceremony. In the ninth month, offering of idlis and modak, the favourite

dish of Lord Ganesh, are tied up in the pallu of the girl's saree and offered to Lord Ganesh.

SINDHIS

The Sindhi community also celebrates the first pregnancy. Wheat flour is kneaded into dough as for rotis and then divided into five balls. The balls are stuffed with sugar and ghee. The mother-to-be is taken to the seashore or riverside by the women folk of the household where each ball is passed around her abdomen and thrown into the water as an offering.

MAHARASHTRIANS

In Maharashtra, "dohaijavan" signifying the craving for certain foods, is celebrated by the womenfolk during the third month by feeding the mother-to-be with the food of her choice. In the next function known as "oti bharane" she is seated and given a new saree and blouse piece. The pregnancy is kept a secret till this stage and not announced to others outside the family circle. During the fifth month the expectant mother is presented with a lot of green bangles and a blouse. Coconut, the usual auspicious token, is not offered to the bride at such rituals during pregnancy. To the seventh month function only relatives are invited and treated to lunch in the traditional style. Five kinds of kheer are served for lunch. The mother-in-law brings five kinds of fruits and five "sumangalis" offer the fruits five times. Kumkum and haldi are applied on her forehead.

PARSIS

Among the Parsis, during the fifth month the young mother-to-be comes out of her bath covered with a coloured stole. She is offered a new saree, blouse, coconut, sugar candy, flowers, kumkum, pan, supari, turmeric roots and a dried date. A traditional brass lamp filled with ghee burns from the morning on this occasion. Mehendi is applied the previous day on the expectant mother's palms and feet. Red tikka is applied on her forehead and on her big toes and a black mark behind her ear to ward off the evil eye. A pinch of rice is also applied on her forehead and the rest showered over her head. Glass bangles are gifted by her mother along with a thin gold chain. A special lunch is served and five pedas made of mava are kept on the table for the girl to taste and distribute among the guests.

GUJARATIS

Among Gujaratis "kudo barvanu" is celebrated in the seventh month of pregnancy. A pooja is performed by the priest in the mother-in-law's house. On the auspicious day the expectant mother has her traditional head bath. As she emerges from the bathroom, a red or white carpet is spread and at her every step betel-nuts and money are placed near her foot. Once she reaches the pooja spot she is seated near the priest. Her husband also joins her for a while. In the pallu of her saree, rice, betel-nut, sweets and other auspicious items are tied which she retains till the end of the ceremony.

BENGALEES

Among the Bengalees, the fifth month celebration is called "Panchomitho". It is held in the mother-in-law's place. A new saree and blouse are presented to the bride on that auspicious day and the mother-to-be is treated to a sumptuous meal which consists of her favourite dishes. It is a purely ladies' function and only members of both the families are present. In the seventh month is celebrated "Shopthomitho", a bit more elaborately. Fried fish tail is a must at the feast, plus kheer, rice and fish curry, dal and vegetable preparations and sweet dahi. The most important and final ceremony during the first pregnancy is "shaadh" during the ninth month. The girl is once again presented with a choice saree and treated to an elaborate feast at which the head of a fish is compulsory. The other items are kheer and banana wada besides five kinds of vegetable preparations and rice.

EAST INDIANS

The East Indians of Maharashtra have more rituals after the birth of the baby than during pregnancy. In fact, it is just a matter of receiving sweets from the neighbours during the ninth month before she leaves for her parental home. It is surprising to note that this community has no celebration during pregnancy unlike the other Maharashtrians whose influence is strong in their other customs.

Shyamala Mahadevan

Chopin, after accompanying a soprano on the piano: "Madam, I play on the white notes and on the black notes, but you sing on the cracks."

The fattest young girl in Parel,
Once slipped and fell in a well,
But there's no need to cry,
The lass didn't die,
All the water splashed out when she fell.

The cardplayer's son learning to count: "One, two three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, jack, queen, king."

The professor called on the student who was looking out of the window,
"Will you tell us what you know about French syntax?"
"Good heavens!" said the pupil,
"do the French have to pay tax on that too?"

Johnny (to six-year-old friend): "Say, Myra, what's new over at your house?"

Myra: "I don't know. My parents spell out everything so I guess they must be talking about sex."

Know why Samson was a good advertising man? Because he took two columns and brought down the house.

When the law raided the Happy Time Strip Show, Morty Baton, the burlesque orchestra leader, was taken away along with the girls and lodged overnight in jail. Next morning in court, Morty stood up for his rights.
"See here, Judge," he said, "I'm just the leader of the musicians.
What's the charge?"
"You," said the Judge, "are charged with disorderly conducting."

She: "The man I marry must be as brave as a lion, but not forward; handsome as Apollo, but not conceited; wise as Solomon, but meek as a lamb; a man who is kind to every woman, but loves only me."
He: "How lucky we met."

Penelope, a Cockney chick, waltzed into a London pub and when she appeared, 'Arry Opkins said, "Deary me, it looks like you'll be soon having one."
Penelope said, "None of yer lip, me lad. That's just the way my coat hangs."

Compiled by George Fegradoe

THE LITTLE WOMAN

by Don Tobin

WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WON ALL THAT MONEY EMILY?
I'D BUY ME A LITTLE DRESS SHOP -
SUPERMARKET SWEEPSTAKES
WIN $50,000
DRAWING ON MONDAY
YOU KNOW - SOMETHING VERY EXCLUSIVE ....WITH NOTHING BUT ORIGINALS FROM THE WORLD'S BEST DESIGNERS!
I'D BE IN SEVENTH HEAVEN! JUST ME AND A SHOP FULL OF BEAUTIFUL CLOTHES!
BUT DRESSES LIKE THAT ARE FRIGHTFULLY EXPENSIVE... I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU'D SELL THEM TO -
SELL THEM?..ARE YOU CRAZY? I WOULDN'T SELL THEM!
WHEN I SAID EXCLUSIVE -I MEANT EXCLUSIVELY FOR ME!
OH -
4-6
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In a recent test, 7 out of 10 people chose Flash over a leading brand with their eyes closed.

Confidence comes easy with Flash care. A Flash user will describe the mm-arvelous sensations that go with each stroke of the brush... the wave after wave of tingly blue mouthcare that leaves your breath singing fresh... your teeth pearly white.

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DENTAL CREAM
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Flash a smile. Pass it on.

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THE STORY SO FAR

Rita Roy, a 12-year-old orphan arrives at Kanchrapara, near Calcutta, to spend the last fortnight of her summer holidays with her Uncle Sunil and Aunt Sheela who live in a picturesque area of the Railway Colony in a red brick house called Gul Mohar. Aunt Sheela expresses surprise when she learns that her sons, Babloo (10), and Bapi (8) failed to meet Rita at the station. Rita finds the situation decidedly odd, especially since Bapi vehemently denies being told of her coming. Putting the matter out of her mind, she concentrates on the lovely house with its neat, pretty interior, savouring the luxury she was so unaccustomed to at the orphanage.

NOW READ ON . . .

PART TWO

the mystery at gul mohar

A Novel For Children

Vernon Thomas

The next morning Rita woke up early. The timepiece on the dressing-table showed it was not quite five yet. As the boys were still asleep, she got out of bed and tip-toed to the window.

The world outside was brightening to a new day. Nature was wide awake. Birds twittered on the tree-tops, the call of the brain fever bird loudest of all. From the hen-house a cock crowed.

The window of the boys' bedroom overlooked a small garden, separated from the rest of the grounds by an untidy hedge of morning glory. The garden could only be entered through a small gate, and Aunt Sheela's bedroom next door. A narrow gravelled path divided it into four neat squares.

This was Aunt Sheela's private garden, which she tended with pride. The gardener was rarely admitted here, where the crotons in pots looked their golden best, where the ferns displayed their fan like heads becomingly; and where red and yellow cannas grew in abundance.

Rita was delighted. She loved gardening. She hoped Aunt Sheela would let her water the plants some day.

Of the sleeping pair, Bapi was the first to wake. He sat up with a yawn.

"What are you doing?" he wanted to know.

"Admiring your Mummy's lovely garden," answered Rita.

"So boring."

With which frank comment Bapi lay down again, not to stir till six.

Breakfast was at six-ten, as Uncle Sunil was due at the Shops by six-thirty. Life started early in the Colony; and Rita felt a bit lost once the meal was over. Aunt Sheela was busy in the kitchen, giving Lakshman his orders for the day; and the boys were having a gay time getting dressed for the morning.

Seated on the sofa in the sitting-room, idly turning the pages of a book of stories, Rita tried to suppress a yawn, as she saw her aunt enter.

Aunt Sheela noticed, and exclaimed at once: "My dear child, you seem quite bored! I must get the boys to show you around today."

She turned to the two as they came in. "Babloo, you must keep your cousin company. Show her the hen-house today. And, Bapi, show her my garden. She's sure to like it."

Rita brightened up at once. "Oh, I do like your garden, Aunty!" she agreed. "I was looking at it from the window this morning."

"I'm glad you like my garden. I look after all those plants myself, you know," said Aunt Sheela proudly. "You can help me sometime, if you wish."

"Oh, I'd love that! I know quite a bit about plants."

"Will we show her the house too, Ma?" asked Bapi.

"She's seen most of the house. But you can show her Baba's trophies — the cups he won at school. Rita, your uncle was a great sportsman in his youth."

"And will we show her Didima's room, Ma?" asked Bapi.

His mother sounded a trifle cross when she answered.

"You leave Didima's room alone. I've told you that often enough."

"But, Ma!" he persisted. "Let us show her Didima's room. She is sure to like Blackie and the dolls."

"You'll do nothing of the sort. And if I have any more trouble from you, watch out!"

Aunt Sheela waved a finger angrily at Bapi as she spoke; and Rita, who had been about to say that seeing Didima's room would be most interesting, decided to hold her tongue. It was disappointing, though to know that Aunt Sheela did not want her to go in there. She had heard so much about Blackie and the dolls from Didima on her visits to the Orphanage.

Blackie had been Didima's pet tom-cat. He had died some years ago. Didima had had him stuffed and kept on her bedside table.

Rita recalled Didima once having told her, "I have asked your uncle to give Blackie to you when I die. You must keep him. Learn to love him."

And the dolls! Didima's collection of clay figures, dressed in dance costumes from the various states of India. How she

THE MYSTERY AT GUL MOHAR

would love to see them! If only Aunt Sheela would let her!

Lunchtime found her both hot and happy. In spite of the heat, the hours out-of-doors had been pleasant. The hen-house had been quite an experience. The Rhode Island cock had been particularly friendly, helping himself to grain from the palm of her hand. And she had loved the yellow balls of fluff, which were the Leghorn chicks.

In the afternoon, the three of them sat under the mango tree.

"Bapi!" Rita remembered to ask all of a sudden, putting down her book. "Why doesn't your Mummy let us go into Didima's room?"

"Ma does not let anyone go into Didima's room," Bapi replied, tremendously busy.

"Whatever can be the reason?"

"I don't know. It's just that no one goes in there since Didima died. Ma keeps the door locked."

"I wish I could see Blackie and the dolls!"

"But you cannot see them. Ma keeps the key," Bapi declared, ending the matter.

"It makes me think there must be a ghost inside," Rita said with a small smile, which froze on her face, when she heard Babloo saying "Yes, there is a ghost inside. Don't try to go in alone."

Rita could not help but shudder.

TO her surprise, however, the following day Aunt Sheela offered to show Rita Didima's room of her own accord. The two of them were alone in the house as Uncle Sunil was away at work, and the boys had gone for a morning walk. Rita had not wished to join them because of the heat.

"Well, my dear," her aunt began brightly. "Here we are on our own! And now I can peacefully show you Didima's room. With those boys around, it is not possible to do anything without trouble."

She selected a large key from the bunch tied to the end of her saree, and led the way.

Didima's room was situated at the back of the house — in a separate wing, which was really an extension of the kitchen.

The entrance to Didima's room was from the outside. Its front door opened directly on to the back lawn

"Getting to this room is always a problem, especially in bad weather," Aunt Sheela pointed out as they walked across the grass.

"But there is another door through the kitchen," Rita said

"How do you know about that door?" Aunt Sheela asked sharply. "Have the boys told you?"

"No, I noticed that door yesterday, when I went into the kitchen," Rita explained.

"We never use that door," Aunt Sheela said. "Maybe your Didima told you about it?" she suggested softly.

"No. Didima did not tell me. Why?"

But Aunt Sheela did not answer. She was busy unlocking Didima's room. As she flung the door open, a musty odour greeted them from inside. And Rita shuddered, as she remembered the ghost.

Then, as her aunt opened a window and the daylight streamed in, she felt better. She noticed the cat, sitting on the bedside table, its amber eyes staring fixedly out of its head.

Blackie!

Blackie sat with his head cocked to one side; his mouth was half-open in a silent "meo-ow;" his fur was shiny black, and an enormous blue ribbon bow was tied around his neck. He was every bit the Raja Didima had always said he was.

As she lifted a hand to stroke his head, Rita held back an urge to shudder. Blackie was so lifeless; he made her feel creepy.

But she must love him, Rita knew. That had been Didima's wish.

"You seem a bit upset, child," Aunt Sheela remarked. "Didn't your Didima tell you about Blackie?"

"She did." And strangely enough, Rita felt better after admitting this.

"And what else did Didima tell you?" Aunt Sheela asked next.

"You mean about Blackie?"

"Blackie and other things, perhaps."

"Other things?" Rita was puzzled.

"Well, the dolls, for instance."

Aunt Sheela pointed to the showcase in the corner, where visible through the glass panes were rows of costumed clay dancing dolls.

"Oh, the dolls!" cried Rita, clasping her hands in delight as she went over to the showcase at once. Pressing her nose to the glass, she ran her eyes up and down the lines of colourfully dressed figures.

"Oh, aren't they lovely!" she cried. She started to identify each one in turn, then stopped suddenly to point out.

"One is missing, I think, Aunty! There is an empty space in the second row."

Aunt Sheela hurried to check. She peered through the glass and withdrew frowning.

"Eleven! I remember there were twelve," she said. "Now how can that be? I am certain they were all here the last time I came in."

She seemed upset, her eyes darting around suspiciously till at last they settled on Rita.

"Are you sure you haven't been in here?" she asked. "Did the boys bring you?"

"I haven't been near this room, Aunty!" Rita cried in dismay.

"Are you sure?"

"But how can I, Aunty, when you have the key?"

"I do, I do," Aunt Sheela admitted slowly. "Though there is another key. One that has been missing since your Didima died. Someone must have been in here and taken that doll."

"Why should anyone want to take just one doll? Surely, they would have taken them all!" Rita pointed out.

"Would they? Now, would they, really? Unless, of course..." and she fell to thinking.

"Well, come on," she said a moment later. "You've seen enough. Let us get back to the sitting-room."

She closed the window, locked the door, and hurried away across the grass, ahead of Rita.

And for the rest of that day it seemed as if she was greatly disturbed — silent and thoughtful, a worried expression on her face.

Rita watched her aunt closely, wondering. Why should Aunt Sheela mind so much about a doll? Were the dolls the reason why she kept Didima's room under lock and key? Maybe it was because she liked dolls, Rita decided that night, as she lay in bed, unable to sleep, due to the heat.

To be continued

NOT JUST SOUP AND HAMBURGER'S

Continued from page 27

ready and hot. This is ideal for thick, nourishing soups, stews, wet casseroles, and now there is a pot for rice too. Somehow it reminds me of the slow cooking practised by my grandmother, who had a much more leisurely schedule. Since the pressure cooker and the microwave oven this has become the greatest boon to American cooks.

The downfall of the average American has been brought about by snacks. Americans become compulsive snack eaters the minute they sit in front of the TV, watching their favourite show. Or in the movie theatre. There seems to be some unwritten law that the hand must move continuouhly to the mouth while the eyes are concentrating on a screen. So far snacks had consisted of greasy French fries, potato chips, nuts and candy. Slowly the movement has started towards fruits and health foods (mixture of nuts and dried foods) replacing the previous unhealthy diets. That is O.K. in the house, but at movies one is still driven to despair by the constant crackle of popcorn and peanuts. Many a healthy eater has given up and decided, if you can't stop them — join them!

One other thing that contributes to tooth decay, obesity, and now they say, cancer, in the United States is Coke. It is manufactured by many others besides the Coca Cola company, and goes under the generic name of "soda" in most households. Americans are being pursuaded to drink more milk, natural spring water, and fruit juices, despite the aggressive campaign that assures people that "Coke adds life" and this is the "Pepsi Generation."

Perhaps the healthiest American habit is orange juice at breakfast. It is easier here, where freshly-squeezed juice is available in cartons at the local grocers'. My poor mother still has to squeeze lemons for my father every morning.

My brother-in-law, who spent a major part of his life here and at Oxford, was so enamoured of this juice-at-breakfast ritual, that he expected his wife, in India, to carry on that tradition. What could she do, but serve him orange squash when oranges were no longer in season? He fumed and fretted, and gave her long lectures about all the preservatives in orange squash being actually harmful to health rather than beneficial. But she was helpless. So fresh fruit replaced juices at their breakfast table. That was possible only because they are both college professors and can afford such luxury. What happens to the health of other Indians?

Among some of our relatives apples and musambi enter the house only when there is someone sick in the family. And these people are far from being poor. It is just that they have yet to be educated into healthy eating habits like so many people in the rest of the world.

Devi

CAUTIOUS WELCOME TO NEW YEAR

Amitabh, Shashi Kapoor, Rekha, Jaya have requested Yash Chopra to book, no, not a table for four, but Delhi, for the shooting of "Silsila" since they all intend to attend the International Film Festival — Amitabh and Shashi to give an uplift to their sagging careers, Rekha to display her superstar status, Jaya to remind folks she is back, if they have forgotten her.

* * *

The New Year is four days ahead as I write. No one has any special plans for celebration except chote-mote get-togethers. The big camps are worried about their multistar output, but the Mukerjees are planning a big party at their "Grotto Villa". While the Kapoor camp is uncertain, the Chopras are planning a dazzling party with the success of "Insaf Ka Tarazu". Rajesh Khanna does not believe in celebrations without a cause. He is not a Calendar man. Just because it is 31 December midnight, Rajesh can never be jubilant, especially when the year has been pretty unkind to him.

Actually the only people who have reason for celebration are Feroz Khan for "Qurbani", B. R. Chora for "Insaf Ka Tarazu", Zeenat Aman for her strips and rape, Padmini Kohlapure for making it to the Royal cheek, Raj Babbar for being the most successful rapist, and Mazhar Khan for being the lone survivor of the "Shaan" crash.

Frankly, every star as per every year, is planning to be in someone else's house. It is so unstarlike to spend one's own money and usher in the New Year.

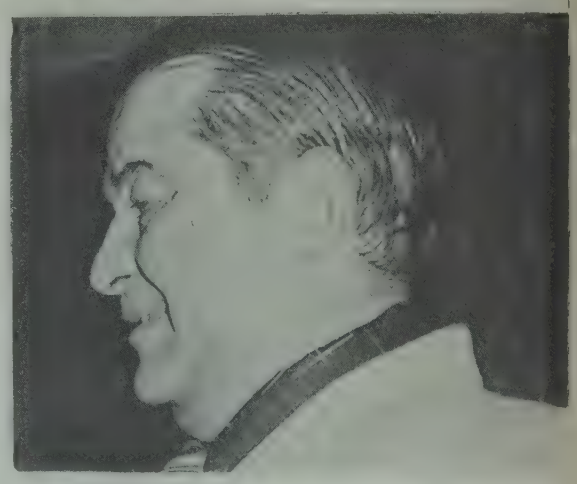
Sunil Dutt was planning to be back in India for New Year since Nargis is recovering speedily, but doctors have advised her to be in New York.

* * *

Filmdom is put off with the raids. Actually they are put off that they were found with a bare minimum. The fact is, very few star homes were raided, but raids being a status symbol these days, everyone is busy with "We were raided, were you?"

* * *

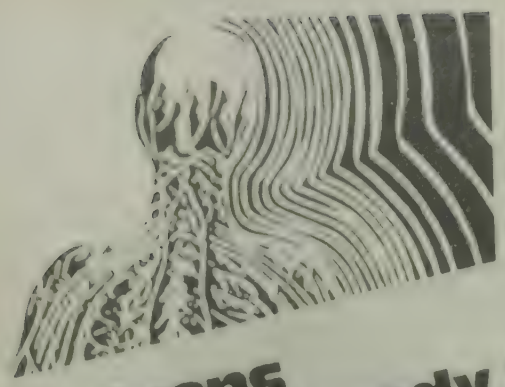
The main celebrations with the Kapoors and Khannas are their birthdays. The Raj Kapoor birthday is like the National Day. He sees to it that the folks around him treat it with reverence. He held the usual morning puja with his family around him, which includes his dog Burly, and new grand-daughter Ridma (Chintu's daughter). He decided against a party in the night, but all the same family members, friends, chamchas and gatecrashers made a neat total of about 200.



* * *

There were bulbs in the trees, stars on the lawn and newly cut bakra on the barbecue. The star list was restricted to Daboo's "Biwi Oh Biwi" and "Prem Rog" units. Star gate-crashers from superstar Rekha to nobody Deepak Parasher tried novel ways of gatecrashing. Like Deepak told Reema at the Bombay airport (she curtailed her Calcutta holiday to be with Daddy) that he was invited, and everyone wondered who had invited him. Then Rekha rang up and announced that she would come only if Amitabh was invited. The family again wondered who had invited her, when there was no party to begin with. Raj, the eternally proper host, seeing us bitching about the gatecrashers, warned us, with his eyes fixed on me, "Don't you be rude to anybody, even if they are gatecrashers."

Baidyanath
CHYAWANPRASH



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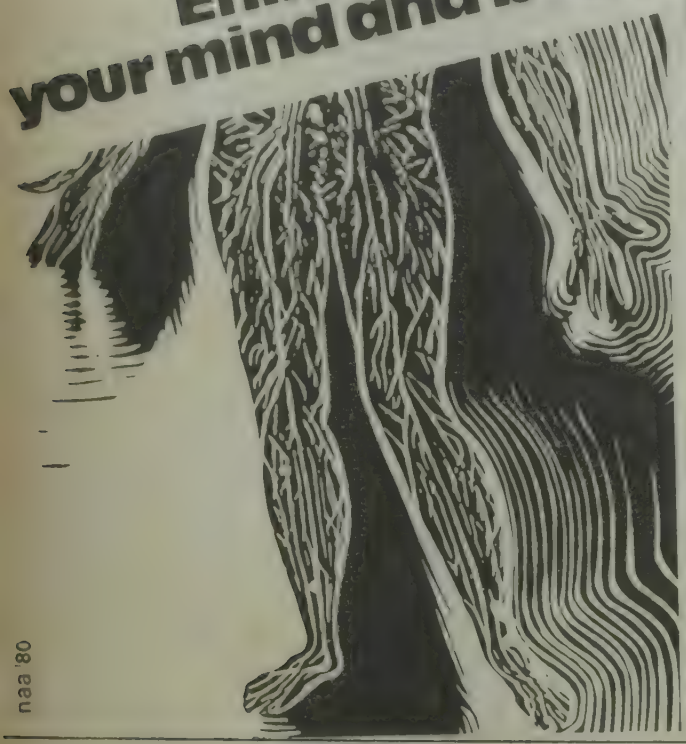

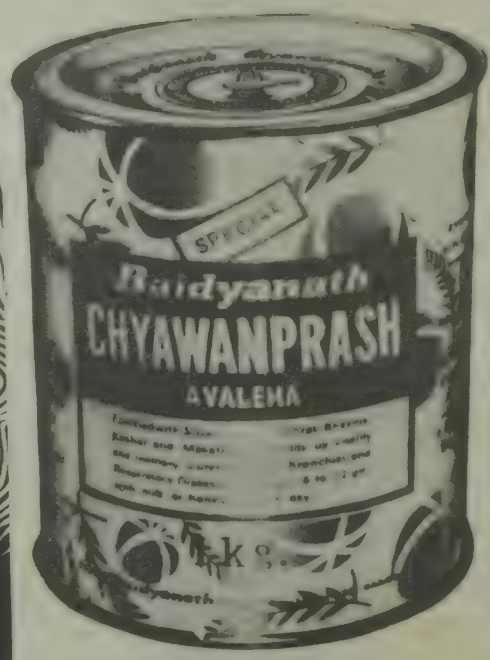

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YOU'RE RIGHT FOR THE JOB AND ATTRACTIVE TOO, BUT UNLESS YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR SKIN!
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IT'S HARD WORK BEING AN AIR HOSTESS - BUT LOTS OF FUN TOO. THANK YOU ANNE FRENCH FOR A LOVELY COMPLEXION - FOR EVERYTHING.
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RUSSIAN JOURNALIST

VALENTINA FEDOTOVA

Russian visitors anywhere are not so common, especially if they are from the press. Hence the visit of Valentina Fedotova, Editor-in-Chief of "Soviet Woman" was definitely something out of the ordinary. One of the largest selling magazines in the USSR, "Soviet Woman" has been described as a magazine intended for the whole family with separate features catering to the Interests of all age groups. Mrs. Fedotova has been associated with the magazine ever since 1968 before which she worked for eight years with Moscow Television. She is also secretary of the Union of Journalists in the USSR.

The magazine's editorial policy states that "this multi-coloured pictorial monthly magazine is not solely the creation of its contributors, editors, photographers, illustrators, artists and printers but that the most essential segment of the magazine is its subscribers, its regular readers and that it is they who give the magazine its existence, continuity and sustenance.

The purpose behind Mrs. Fedotova's trip to India was therefore to gauge the likes and dislikes of their Indian readers, to meet Indian editors and journalists and to assess the coverage of Indian women's journals.

"Soviet Woman" is published in fourteen different languages of the world — French, German, Spanish, Arabic, Portuguese and Italian to name a few. Hindi and Bengali are also included in the fourteen. The magazine has appointed Madan Lal, a well known Hindi poet to help out with the Hindi edition and Hafizur Rehman looks after the Bengali edition. Mrs. Fedotova said that readership surveys and subscriber lists reveal that the Hindi edition of "Soviet Woman" is very popular among Indian women and care is taken to include in the magazine articles related to the different spheres of Indian life.

At a meeting with the press Mrs. Fedotova denied the existence of discrimination against women journalists in Soviet Russia and named half a dozen popular magazines with women editors. She said that an increasing number of Soviet women are turning to journalism as a profession. She said quite firmly that "Soviet Woman" was not a feminist magazine and that in the USSR the question of women's liberation did not arise because men and women are accorded equal rights. But further questioning revealed that in practice, the traditional role of woman as a cook-cum-ayah still exists. Russian men may or may not help out in the kitchen "but that varies from house to house." So though Marxism, in theory states absolute equality between the sexes, Russian women are yet to be liberated from so called "women's jobs".

When asked to comment on the three underground feminists who were recently exiled from Russia on account of their startling revelations on the plight of Russian women, Mrs. Fedotova dismissed them as "trouble makers" who wanted to leave the country and were hence given the chance to do so. The Russian artistes who have defected to the west and the Russians seeking political asylum in non-communist countries, could, she said, be counted on one's fingers and were a negligible minority in a nation of several million satisfied citizens.

The visit of President Leonid Brezhnev to India sparked off unusual interest about India in the Soviet Union and Mrs. Fedotova and fellow journalist Mrs. Lesovaia plan to publish a resume on Indian life as they saw it, in forthcoming issues of "Soviet Woman".

Minu Cherian

APARNA SEN

Continued from page 11

A. Mostly good. I've had great fun working with Jim and Ismail. I've always felt like one of the gang — and that's a very healthy feeling to have when you're working on a film. I'll never forget the super experience of working with an actress like Dame Peggy Ashcroft!

Q. How would you compare the Bengal industry with the Bombay one — in terms of creativity only — artistes, directors, musicians, story writers.

A. I think Bombay now compares very favourably with Calcutta especially in the context of the small budget film. Even if one leaves aside the art film scene, films like "Gharaonda", "Khubsoorat", "Shaque", "Rajnigandha", etc. are good, clean entertainment.

Q. Do you enjoy being a film actress?

A. Yes and No. I love acting and am never more happy than when I'm emoting in front of a camera. Reaching a moment of truth in acting is like a sudden skyward surge — it makes all the tedium worthwhile. But reaching such high points becomes increasingly difficult in patently absurd stories being directed by indifferent directors.

Q. Any favourites in the Indian scene? Actors/directors, etc.?

A. Sure, I absolutely adored Naseeruddin Shah in "Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyoon Aata Hai". I think he compares very favourably with actors like Al Pacino and Robert De Niro, especially with reference to his performance in "Albert Pinto". One has to speak in the same glowing terms of Sayeed Mirza's directorial work in the film. I enjoyed the film thoroughly. Other favourites in the acting field are Dr. Lagoo, Sanjeev Kumar, Kulbhooshan Kharbanda Smita Patil, Shabana Azmi, Jennifer Kapoor, Deepti Naval. Among directors, leaving aside stalwarts like Satyajit Ray and Mrinal Sen, I admire the work of Shyam Benegal and M. S. Sathyu and also Adoor Gopalakrishnan.

Q. Any role/roles that you have always wished to play?

A. I have just played a lovely role — the girl-bride of Tagore's "Nouko Doobi". Its always a pleasure playing a character out of a classic. For one thing it's safer — you can always be reasonably certain that the role will at least be well-conceived. Other such roles that I'd love to play are Bimala in "Ghare-Baire" and Binodini in "Chokher Bali" — again both novels by Tagore. I would also enjoy playing Indira in Bankim Chandra's novel of the same name.

Q. Ever thought of involvement in any other area of films?

A. Which sensitive film artiste hasn't? You can't be in front of the camera day in and day out, year in and year out without wanting to go behind it sometime. Yes. I would like to try my hand at script-writing and direction.

At the time of writing, Aparna's "wanting to go behind the camera" has become a reality.

"It is really far too early to speak about the film," she said, "except that, contrary to popular and persistent news flashes, it is not an all-woman affair at all, and nor am I trying my best to see that it will be an all-woman show! In fact, with the exception of Jennifer and I — and of course the other necessary characters in the film — women don't feature at all. My assistants are all men."

Entitled "36 Chowringhee Lane", she has lived with the story from 1976, initially meaning to write it as a short story. But, as she charmingly added, "It sort of grew in great visual detail. I left it for a while and then re-wrote it as a film script. It was, truthfully, more of an intellectual exercise than anything else, until . . . it became a reality! Naturally, I am thrilled about it!"

The subject matter deals with an Anglo-Indian woman's interaction with two young, vibrant, alive people — the joys and heartbreaks they bring to her, superimposed on the larger canvas of the Anglo-Indian's plight in today's India. Jennifer Kendal will play the central character in the film, produced by Shashi Kapoor under the banner of Filmwala. Other cast and credits have yet to be finalised.

Did Aparna's involvement in direction mean that she would quit acting? "Certainly not! In fact, I've just signed on for two movies. It's just that I feel I have something to say and I can express it best through the medium of a film."

Mrs. Hena Rahimtulla demonstrating an Ikebana arrangement to the accompaniment of classical music rendered by Mrs. Saroj Ramamrutham and Mrs. Manorama Vira at "Sangeet Pushpanjali" presented by the Indian Chapter of the Ohara School of Ikebana in aid of the Fellowship of the Physically Handicapped.

A lavish X'mas party was hosted by Hotel Oberoi Towers for 100 children from two local orphanages in Bombay.

LEFT: Mrs. Sujata Chakravarti, President, Central Railway Women's Social Service Committee (ext. right) and members of the Executive Committee, welcome Mr. C. K. Jaffer Sharief, Minister of State for Railways at a cultural evening organised by the Committee in Bombay. Also seen is Mr. A. K. Chakravarti, G. M., Central Railway.

BOMBAY

Under the auspices of the National Centre for the Performing Arts, the United States International Communication Agency and the Time and Talents Club Concerts Committee will present two performances of the "Annapolis Brass Quintet," America's only full time performing brass ensemble.

The programme will include music from the Renaissance period to Contemporary.

The performances will be held on January 26, and 27, 1981, at Homi Bhabha Auditorium and Tata Theatre (NCPA) respectively. Tickets for the show will be on sale from January 14 onwards at the Club Office, Apollo Pier Road from 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.

The proceeds of the concerts will be donated towards the welfare of the disabled.

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A grand cultural evening of music, dance and drama was organised by the Central Railway Women's Social Service Committee at VT Auditorium in aid of Central Railway Bharat Scouts and Guides.

Mr. C. K. Jaffer Sharief, Minister of State for Railways, was the chief guest. The programme included songs in Hindi, Marathi and Bengali and mimicry presented by the Central Railway Cultural Academy, Kurla; a Hindi Drama, presented by the Central Railway Officers' Ladies Club, Dadar, and exquisite classical dances by the "Usankar Ballet Troupe".

• • •

An exhibition of murals and paintings by Anju Sheth was held at the Jehangir Art Gallery recently. Mr. Arunbhai Shroff, Director, T.V. Centre, Bombay, inaugurated the exhibition.

• • •

The 6th Annual Trade Fair of the Institute of Hotel Management, Catering Technology & Applied Nutrition, was inaugurated by Mrs. Satya Mehra, wife of Air Chief Marshal O. P. Mehra, Governor of Maharashtra. Miss Thangam E. Philip, Principal of the Institute, welcomed the chief guest.

Special lunches at reasonable rates and gourmet buffet lunches and dinners for the more discerning palates are prepared and served by the staff and students of the Institute.

The Dietary Department exhibited diets for children, low cost snacks and meals and a special feature on kitchen equipment for the physically handicapped.

A galaxy of fruit gateaux and sumptuous snacks were on display and sale in the bakery and confectionery department. Featured also was a wide variety of convenience foods — jams, jellies, squashes, pickles, nectars etc.

• • •

A dance recital by Komala Varadan was presented by Hon. Major Ramprasad Poddar, President, The Century Spg. & Mfg Co. Ltd., Bombay, at Tata Theatre, National Centre for the Performing Arts. Komala has been acclaimed for her virtuosity and purity of style. As a child artiste, she was the first to give full length concerts in Malaysia and Singapore. She has choreographed and directed a ballet entitled, "Thirukutrala Kuravanji". Besides her achievements in the field of dance, Komala is an author of considerable repute in Tamil, and a successful painter who has held a number of shows in different parts of the country.

• • •

To celebrate the 18th All India Day For The Retarded, The Association for the Welfare of Persons with A Mental Handicap In Bombay, organised a week-long programme starting with a children's film show and inauguration of the Box Collection Drive. Special Olympics were sponsored jointly by A.W.M.H. Bombay, and Lions Clubs International District 323 A under the guidance of the Maharashtra Olympic Association.

ABOVE: A play entitled, "The Sound of Music" was put up by the students of Convent of Jesus and Mary School in Delhi recently.

ABOVE : The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. M. G. Ramachandran, inaugurated a Medical Center and an Adult Education Center at Vellalore near Coimbatore. He is seen here with members of the Ladies Circle No. 11 who have adopted the village.

RIGHT : The Leo Club of Dahisar organised an elocution competition for partially deaf and mute children in Bombay recently. Seen (from left) are Leo Deepak Jhaveri, Lion Chandulal Kothary, chief guest Mr. Dilip Kumar, and Leo President Myra Vaz.

RIGHT : At the opening of Shahnaz Health Clinic in Ludhiana, are seen (from left) Shahnaz Husain, Nita Bhandari, Principal, Women's World Beauty School, and Mrs. Butker, President, Lakshmi Ladies Club.

DELHI

The third international seminar on "Maternal and perinatal mortality, pregnancy termination, and sterilisation" was inaugurated by the Lt. Governor of Delhi, Mr. Jagmohan. An exhibition on the subject was inaugurated by Mr. N. R. Laskar who was also the chief guest. Five hundred delegates from 21 countries participated on the important themes of the seminar. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi invited the delegates to tea later.

CALCUTTA

A Japanese Woodblock Print exhibition, entitled "Famous Views of Edo (Tokyo)", was held by the Consulate General of Japan, at the Academy of Fine Arts. The blocks showed one hundred famous views of Edo and was fascinating as an example of the art of Hiroshige (1797-1858).

* * *

Uday Villa held an exhibition of pottery at British Decor Service recently. The special technique applied by Uday Villa gives a special look to the dinner sets and dishes which are also heat resistant and within the housewife's budget. The decorative pieces comprised vases, ashtrays and pitchers.

* * *

The Naval Week celebrations of the Indian Navy in Calcutta were inaugurated by Mrs. Kamal Basu, wife of the Chief Minister of West Bengal to the chanting of Sanskrit hymns. The first item was the carnival arranged at the Man of War Jetty, with attractive stalls, films on naval affairs and an exhibition of naval armaments and equipment. The visitors were highly entertained by the staging of a mock trial at the court of Varuna, God of the Ocean. Vice Admiral M. K. Roy, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, welcomed the distinguished visitors on board INS Kittan.

BANGALORE

The Maitri Mahila Mandali celebrated their first anniversary at L.I.C. colony playground. Mrs. Vimala Kannan presided. The highlight of the evening was a humorous drama, written, produced, directed and acted by Mr. Y. M. N. Murthy, President, Humour Club International.

* * *

Mrs. Renuka Rajendran, Minister of State for Youth Services and Sericulture, Government of Karnataka, gave away certificates and prizes at the conclusion of the second interior decoration appreciation course, conducted by Asian Paints. Nearly a hundred ladies received certificates. A colourful exhibition of their charts and models proved very popular. Mrs. Shakuntala Balu explained the salient features of the course.

* * *

The Zonta Club arranged a festive Mela to collect funds for their charity projects. The Mela drew more than 5000 visitors and there was brisk business at the food stalls and the sales counters. Folk dances and puppet shows were additional attractions.

OOTACAMUND

Comex-10, the Commonwealth expedition, representing the U.K., Canada, Zambia, and India, led by Col. Gregory, gave a delightful concert of music, mime, song and dance at the Y.W.C.A., Anandagiri. The concert was well-attended by the public of Ooty. There was a collection at the door, the proceeds of which went to the Friend in Need Society.

FOR THE WEEK. JAN. 11 — 17, 1981

John Naylor

IF IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY THIS WEEK:

A romantic year — also a lucky one for money. There will be chances to boost your income. Quite vigorous influences affect business matters and some secret tips and information will confirm your own summing up of current trends. However, don't neglect the social side of life; it will be rewarding in unexpected ways! In health and beauty matters, be careful about using methods and preparations you are unfamiliar with around July/August. If you feel like making changes, proceed slowly and cautiously. Otherwise, you should feel energetic, and flattering attention from the opposite sex will boost your confidence.

ARIES
(March 22 — April 20)

There will be plenty of opportunities, socially, yet, you might be over-absorbed in mundane issues. If you are trying to get a new venture off the ground or perhaps organising domestic changes, favour the new where it seems feasible.

TAURUS
(April 21 — May 21)

Should you have found it necessary to shelve a special aim or ambition recently, this can be revived now. Take time, in all activities, to complete necessary groundwork, before pushing ahead.

GEMINI
(May 22 — June 21)

People will be in the mood to do you favours. Your affairs should progress well after recent hassles; you'll have more cash in hand, or there is some on the way. If single, the scene is set for romance to begin, if you keep active socially.

CANCER
(June 22 — July 23)

Life will have only minor irritations for a few weeks, unlike the recent past. If you let companions take the lead, fit in with their ideas and plans. This is a relatively smooth-running phase. Delay spending as you'll get much better value next month.

LEO
(July 24 — Aug 23)

You will do more for others than they do for you! You won't have much choice but to agree to arrangements you are not keen on. Changes are in the air, but try not to force any yourself. Do your best to avoid arguments.

VIRGO
(Aug 24 — Sept 23)

News you are waiting for could set you arranging a journey. Also a joyous reunion or a letter from a loved one. Possibly a family celebration, perhaps an engagement, wedding or christening party.

LIBRA
(Sept 24 — Oct 23)

Jupiter in Libra is a fortunate factor, slightly dampened by the presence of Saturn in your sign, but efforts will bring rewards. You will be thrown together with some attractive people.

SCORPIO
(Oct 24 — Nov 22)

Widen your social horizons; you could gain entry to a new and rewarding social circle. If there is anything in your working set-up that you are dissatisfied with you could find a way to improve the situation. The same applies in family affairs.

SAGITTARIUS
(Nov 23 — Dec 22)

You'll be in tune with life and people. There is indication of good news from an official source; it is a good time to apply for a visa or concession. Keep up socially; friendships are important just now.

CAPRICORN
(Dec 23 — Jan 20)

Mercury moves out of your sign and Venus moves in. Your charm will be potent; your luck will hold good. Make the most of friendly contacts, businesswise, also your powers of persuasion.

AQUARIUS
(Jan 21 — Feb 19)

Mars and Mercury are in your sign and promise an eventful phase. Life could be dynamic, romantic. Have confidence, take the initiative. An excellent time for health matters; take positive action if you have a problem.

PISCES
(Feb 20 — March 21)

A ticking-over period perhaps, but a highly enjoyable one. Light-hearted companionship will bring in useful information, pleasing introductions. You will soon be into a more vigorous period, but the time may be short, so be up to date on routine matters.

SCHOOLING FOR PREGNANCY

Continued from page 17

expulsion, was under way. Whenever the contraction began, Dr. Jain asked me to push with all my might to bring the baby out. When the doctor said, "Three more pushes and your baby will be here," I was so thrilled I started pushing with more force. This needs a lot of strength as the muscles feel like jelly! This is the only time I felt I needed more strength than I possessed, but Dr. Jain's continuous reporting of my progress along with her encouragement did a lot to boost my strength.

At last she said, "One more push" and I gave it all I had and my child's head was out. At this stage she asked me to relax which I promptly did. The rest of the baby came out quite effortlessly. At 11.17 I saw our son being held upside down and he was screaming his lungs out. He weighed 7½ pounds. We were both overjoyed and then I said to myself, "I never thought it would be so simple!" I was so excited that in spite of the sedation I didn't sleep a wink that night. I was talking to Nainy and my sister till 1.30 a.m. Fortunately Nainy had special permission to visit me at 7.30 next morning and I was dressed and ready by 6 a.m. Dr. Jain arrived at 8.30 a.m. and we had a chat about my labour. She herself was quite surprised at the speed of my labour and delivery. She attributed it to my active life and exercises during pregnancy and also my positive outlook towards the whole process. I will never forget her words, "Uma, it's all in the mind, we can will our body to do whatever our mind wants."

If we look at our society it is mainly in the upper socio-economic class that women have difficulty in labour, and more caesareans (Epidural is used to ease the labour). In the lower economic groups most of the women work till the last minute and spring back to active life very very quickly. I was talking to the bai who came to bathe my son, and she said they are usually out of bed on the 13th day after delivery, and in the village they work in the fields till labour begins. It all goes to prove that the more active we are during pregnancy the easier it is during delivery. We must persuade ourselves to think that pregnancy is a normal process for most of us.

Uma Kumbera Nain holds a post-graduate degree in home economics and is the manager of a well-known health club in Bombay.

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